Birth Centenary Celebrations

Special No. (i)

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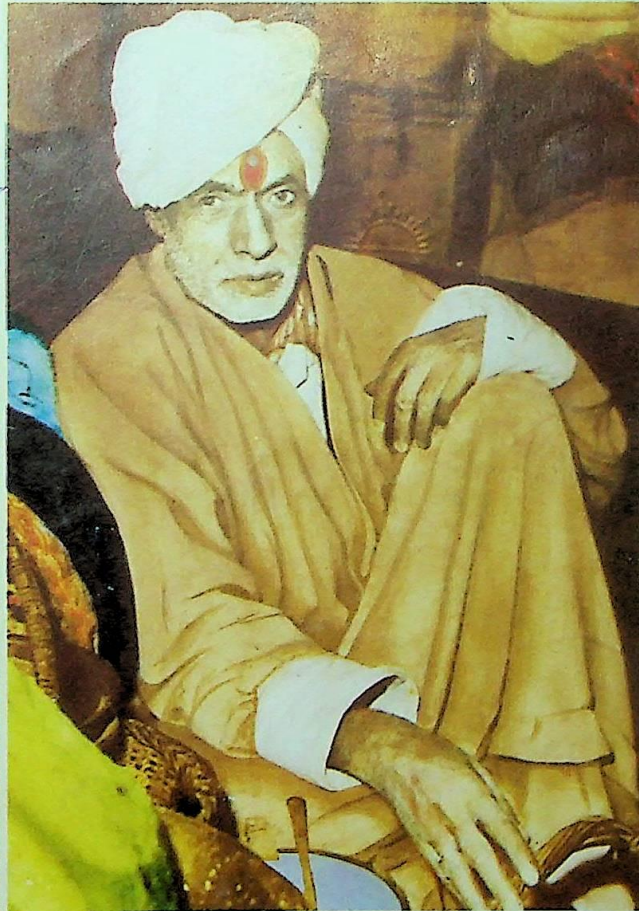
Jagadguru BHAGAWAAN GOPINATHJI

(BHAGAVAAN GOPINATHJI TRUST)

Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi-110 048 (INDIA)

In Loving Memory of Prominent Members of the Trust who Served the Institution with Great Dedication

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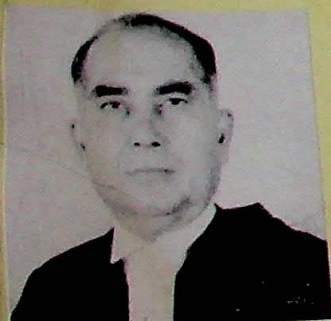
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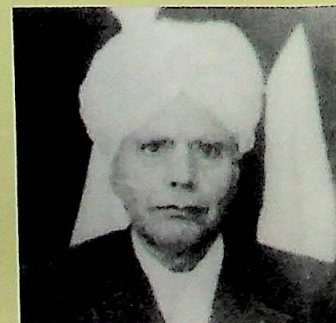
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PATRIKA

BHAGAVAN GOPINATHJI TRUST

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Editorial

We are now half-way through the celebration of the birth centenary of Bhagavanji – many events connected with the centenary have been held the world over with great fervour and jubilation, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the devotees actively associated with the various B.G.T centres in the country and abroad. This gives us a sense of satisfaction and we are now eagerly looking forward to the culmination of the year-long observances in the celebration of the 100th Mahajayanti day that falls on the 6th of July, 1998. That day presents to us all the rare opportunity to be the recipients of Bhagavanji's infinite grace - precisely of a special spiritual bounty that our "*Tathi Bab*"(Darling Father) will bestow on us, depending on how sincerely and passionately we seek it from Him !

We should realize that the year of celebrations that is on is a testing period for all of us - devotees of the great Bhagavan. We must be on our guard against a sense of complacency that could result from our taking pride in the success of our programmes and in attributing it to our own efforts rather than to Bhagavanji's *kripa*. The workers at various centres have, in fact, a special responsibility to see that everything is done in keeping with the glorious tradition the Trust has built up over the decades conforming to Bhagavanji's teachings.

Our scriptures tell us that human birth itself is a great blessing and God-realization the rarest of human achievements, enabling man to be free from the endlessly recurring cycle of rebirths. While such an achievement demands a remarkable initiative, will and determination from the *mumukhshu* (aspirant for liberation), the Sadguru's *kripa* is indispensably required to overcome the hurdles and difficulties on the spiritual path. Mere *tapas* is not enough. Neither knowledge of the scriptures nor the observance of fasts and rituals can take the aspirant very far. Sincerity and devotion to the Guru, accompanied by a constant craving for divine grace, can alone perform a miracle. So, all of us, who have taken shelter under Bhagavanji's 'umbrella' - irrespective of nationality, caste, creed, colour, age or sex - have reason to depend on the infinite kindness of the great Jagad Guru he is. He will surely shower his grace on us, and the present year of celebration is specially valuable and auspicious for the earnest devotee to expect the "rare miracle" to happen in terms of his own spiritual "transformation" - what makes God-realization possible.

I would conclude with what an Indian well-wisher of ours from America writes: "Here in America, I find people are more organized and modest than most of us are. I pray that Bhagavan Gopinath Ji endows us with this efficiency so that we are able to attain some spiritual qualities in us and help others to imbibe the same." I hope the readers will ponder over this statement in their spiritual interest.

"Jai Bhagavan Ji"

- Pran Nath Kaul

Bhagavanji as a Lover of Music

- Jagannath Shivpuri

[This detailed write-up contributed by the veteran musician of note, Pt. Jagannath Shivpuri, reveals a dimension of Bhagavanji's personality of which not enough has been said in Shri S.N. Fotedar's biography of the great saint. Inevitably, some autobiographical element has crept into this valuable piece that reveals the author's own extra-ordinary devotion to the Bhagavan and to music (which he has served all his life with passionate love)]

SHRI KRISHNA says in the Gita : " *Vedanam Samvedosmi* "(of the Vedas, I am Samveda). That should explain the vital connection seen between music and spirituality. Devotional music, conforming to Shastri Sangeet, is believed to be very helpful to the aspirant in his *sadhana*. It serves as an excellent aid to meditation on the Divine, a sure means of attaining effortless concentration on the chosen Deity. It is not without significance that majority of the great saints in all cultures and climes have been lovers of music. The instances of saint-singers across cultures are legion. What follows hereinafter is an account of how intimately I have known Bhagavanji as a lover of music; he had a special ear for Shastri Sangeet.

Decades back, precisely in the year 1944, some friends of mine and a few disciples, including Shri Raghunathji Saproo (a postman by profession) and Shri Premnath Manwati, decided to visit the *Khirbhavani* shrine at Tulamula on the occasion of *Ashad Ashtami*. We started for the place a day before by a *donga* (a house boat), carrying with us several musical instruments- a *sitar*, a pair of *tablas*, a *tanpora* and a harmonium. We reached Tulamula at 9 p.m the same day. On the following morning, when it was Ashtami, we took a bath and then performed *pooja*. Thereafter I went to a *Halvai's* shop and borrowed a couple of mats from him. Who do I see in the shop besides the *Halvai* ? A simple-looking person wearing a *pheran*, and a turban on his head, typifying a Kashmiri Pandit. He was absorbed in puffing at his *chillum*. Without paying much attention to him, I moved to a corner of the ground (around the temple) and spread the mats there, covering them with a blanket. My companions and I sat on the spot for a while and then moved back into our donga. Having had our mid-day meal, we came back to our spot and around 5 p.m. I again went to the shop mentioned earlier to purchase *naveed* - that is offered to the Deity and partly serves as *prasad* for the devotees. The *Halvai* was engaged in frying *luchis* (considered tasty as oiled bread, especially when warm) and the turbaned man with the *chillum* noticed by me earlier was not seated in the shop that time. I then joined my companions at the spot we had selected. As the evening *Arti* began, we performed our *pooja*, offering roses and other kinds of flowers into the holy spring of Ragya Bhavani. As the Arti was over, I again went to the *Halwai's* shop to pay for the things I had purchased. Once again I saw the turbaned Kashmiri smoking the *chillum*. Considering him an ordinary person, I left the shop and joined my companions in the boat to partake of dinner. We then shifted to our chosen spot, carrying with us the musical instruments we had brought with us from Srinagar.

At about 10 p.m we began singing *bhajans* and *bols* based on *Shastri Sangeet* and continued doing so through the night. There were several other *mandalis* as well engaged in singing *bhajans*, seated at various spots away from us. At about 1.30 a.m., as I was singing Tulsidas's *bhajan* " *Jai Jai Shri Rajkishori* " in the *rag Bhageshwari* accompanied by my disciple Choonilal on the harmonium and other disciple Sarwanand Langoo on the tabla, I noticed the turbaned Kashmiri (seen by me twice at the *Halwai's* shop) in the crowd of listeners, observing us from a distance for some time, after which he left the spot. Perhaps he was noticed by me alone and not by anyone else. We stayed at the shrine till the morning of *Ashad Dashmi*. Before we left back for Srinagar, I did not see the Kashmiri again, whom I had seen with the *chillum* in his hands at the Halwai's shop.

One day in the month of Ashad, in the year 1946 (exactly two years after I had been to Tulamula, as narrated above), a man came to see me in Prem

Sangeet Niketan, Kralakhud, Srinagar, as I was engaged in teaching my students Shastri Sangeet. He conveyed to me that Master Shankar Pandit, celebrated scholar and educationist (known to have been a lover of music) wanted me to sing for a saint. Since I held Masterji in high regard, I entrusted my class to a senior disciple. Handing over the harmonium to the man who had brought me word from the Master, I also took a tabla-player alongwith and was brought to a house in Dalhasanyar. I was shown into a room in which, to my surprise, I found the same man that I had seen at Tulamula two years before, holding, as usual, the *chillum* in his hands. I thought to myself that it would be futile of me to sing Shastri-Sangeet-based songs for the man in question, assuming that he would not appreciate or comprehend classical music. I got a little perplexed over this. I found the few persons present in the room, including Master Shankar Pandit, addressing the man as '*Bab*'. So I saluted him. Then turning to Masterji with my hands folded, I started singing the bhajans of Mirabai, Kabirdas and Surdas, playing on the harmonium too myself. Babji was deeply absorbed in puffing at the *chillum* and he looked ocassionally at me. Finally, I sang Kabir Das's bhajan '*Mana lago mero yar faqiri main*'. I could see that Babji felt both delighted and excited over the bhajan and looked at me frequently in applause. In the hightened state, he went on having puff after puff at his *chillum*. I sang for about an hour and a half, and then rested. A lady brought us tea in the meanwhile and we all enjoyed sipping it in cups. I then sought permisssion from Master Shankar Pandit to leave. He pointed towards Babji. Taking the cue from his gesture, I sought the Bab's 'nod' to let me go. He nodded his assent and so bowing to him, I left the house along with my companion (carrying back our instruments to the Nieketan). Then we dispersed and I came back home.

Those days I was posted as establishment clerk in the Revenue Secretariat and would, as such, shift to Jammu for six months with the *Darbar* move. Before leaving for Jammu that year, I felt an urge to call on Babji. So, accompanied by two of my disciples, and equipped with the required instruments, I again visited Bhagavanji's house at Dalhasanyar to sing for him. At about 7 p.m. I started singing bhajans in Hindi to the accompaniment of the harmonium (which I handled myself); my companions played on the other instruments. This time the number of the inmates was bigger than what it was on the earlier occasion. Hindi being accessible to them, they all enjoyed listening to the *bhajans* I sang. I left the house after obtaining Bab Maharaj's permission. Within a few days thereafter, I shifted to Jammu for six months. On my return to Srinagar, after another three months had elapsed, I once again felt a strong urge to have a darshana of Babji. I asked one of my pupils, who lived in the vicinity of Dalhasanyar, to enquire about the whereabouts of Bab Maharaj.He informed me, on the following day, that the saint had shifted to another house in Habbakadal area. Thereupon I directed a few of my pupils to find out his exact residential address. It was actually a Pandit shopkeeper, repored to be fond of and on the look out for saints, who informed me that 'Bhagavan Gopinathji' (whom I earlier knew as Bab Maharaj) lived then in his sister's house at Rishi Mohalla (behind Khardori mohalla). That is how I came to know of the saint's actual name, given to him at his birth by the family he was born into and also of the fact of his being called '*Bhagavan*' by his votaries. I could not, however, make up my mind about seeing Bhagavanji at his new residence because of some domestic preoccupations and the passing away of my father.

Later, probably in the month of August 1947, I did call on Bhagavanji at his Rishi Mohalla residence (when I did not carry any instrument with me). As the Bhagavan looked at me, he smiled which indicated that he recognized me. A bhajan in Kashmiri was being sung in chorus in his room at that time. I noticed Bhagavanji performing the 'physical action' with his hands of something like holding a gun and aiming it at a target and he was also looking towards the sky. I too was requested by those present to sing, but I declined the request politely, the reason being that there was no one around who would accompany me on the tabla. I accepted *prasad* from Bhagavanji and left. That very year, in the month of October, during the days of the Dussehra festival, Kashmir was invaded by the *qabailies* with the active connivance and support of Pakistan. Consequently panic gripped the valley and many Kashmiri Hindus fled away. I recollected the physical action I had noticed Bhagavanji performing (mimicking a soldier holding the gun in his hands and aiming it at a target), signifying that he had foreseen the armed conflict between India and Pakistan. I narrated what I had seen the Bhagavan

doing to my friends and the members of my family.

Thereafter I continued seeing Bhagavanji occasionally at his Rishi mohalla residence till 1951. Until that year, I had remained posted as an Accounts Clerk in the Rural Development Department, Srinagar. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah headed the state Govt. then (as Prime Minister) and Mr. Kazmi was the Director of Education, who was a very cultured person. He was keenly interested in the promotion of Kashmiri *Sofiana* music since it was in a state of decline and was fast dwindling. Mr. Kazmi desired this music to be reduced to notations. He consulted some musicians of Kashmir and several others from outisde the state in this behalf, but could make no headway. There was one musician alive then, well-versed in *Sofiana* music - Ustad Ramzan Joo, who was in his early seventies. My name too had been suggested to Kazmi Sahib by someone as the one who could be consulted in connection with the promotion and revival of Sofiana music. Kazmi Sahib called me to his residence. When I called on him, I found Ramzan joo also present there, holding a small *sitar* in his hands. When Kazmi Sahib asked me if I could undertake the work he wanted to be accomplished (relating to notation) I replied to him that I would make the effort. I must say that it was because of Bhagavanji's *kripa* that I had the confidence to take the difficult and challenging task in hand in collaboration with Ramzan Joo in the T.T. College, Magarmal Bagh, during the tenure of Mr. Ghulam Ahmed Mukhtar as the Principal of the College. It took me a full year to reduce 15 *muqams* of *Sofina* music to notations. My manuscript was printed and published by the State Govt. under the title ' *Kashmiri Mosiqi* ' (Sargam). After Sheikh Abdullaha's Govt. was dismissed, Mr. A. Kazmi ceased to be the Director of Education and he left the state. The work I had begun did not make any further advance.

Till the year 1955, I saw Bhagavanji at the Rishi Mohalla residence, a couple of times every month and occasinally entertained him with music. For some period, however, I was afflicted by domestic worries and had many preoccupations; the result was I did not call at his residence for several months. Finally when I did call at his house, I was told that he had moved to a house in Chandapora, Habba-kadal, but I was not aware of the precise residential particulars. I was, however, aware that the house he had shifted to was only a little away from my Institute (Prem Sangeet Niketan) at Kralakhud, Srinagar. Circumstances thus did not allow me to see Bhagavanji for a continuous period of 2 years until a day in 1958 when a stranger came to see me in my Institute and said, " Bhagavanji asked me to go to Kralkhud, look for the music master there and convey to him that he should come to me." I asked him if he was aware of the exact location of the Niketan to which he replied in the negative. It was Friday. The man guided me to Bhagavanji's Chandapora residence. As I saluated the Bhagavan and came close to him, he whispered these words into my ear, "come here tomorrow at 9 p.m for bhajan, bringing with you the four-stringed instrument (implying thereby the *tanpora*)." I was simply amazed at Bhagavanji's awareness of the instrument, since it is mainly used in Shastri sangeet. I took leave of Bhagavanji and went back to the Institute. However, I did not tell any one of the '*tanpora*' episode that had intrigued me.

On the next day my two disciples, Choonilal Ji and Dwarkanath Ji, accompanied me to Bhagavanji's; we carried with us a pair of *tablas* and a *tanpora* only. We found four other persons present in Bhagavanji's room and began our *sangeet* at 8.30 p.m. He looked particularly pleased that night, as he listened to the music. Perhaps he appreciated the Shastri sangeet for its classical purity - to be attributed to the use of *tanpora* (with the exclcusion of the harmonium). We continued till 10 p.m and then had rest for about an hour, during wheih we had our dinner. Resuming our musical session at 1 p.m., I sang my own *bol* " *Ram nam baj re mana*" in the rag *Kidara*. With the *chillum* in his hands, Bhagavanji looked delighted; he must have heartily enjoyed the song and I noticed him talking to himself in whisper. Then I switched to Rajeshwari tune in which I sang anothr *bol* of mine '*Raj Rajeshwari mata Bhavani*'. For about 45 minutes I sang in slow rhythm; as I changed to fast rhythm, within a few minutes, Bhagavanji snatched the *tanpora* from me and making a sign to me to continue with my singing, started playing on the stringed instrument with the four fingers of his right hand. Having handled the *tanpora* for about 10 minutes, he handed it back to me and I finished the song in a short time. Bhagavanji went down to the ground floor, got into the toilet for sometime and then washed his face etc. He was back in the room within 20 minutes or so, resumed his seat, wore his turban (tying it on his head afresh),

put the vermilion mark on his forehead and began making offerings into the *dhooni*. He signed to me to resume singing. Appropriate to the hour, I began *Ram Kali 'khayal'* in both slow and fast tunes. Beig my own composition as all the earlier ones, its bol, as framed by me, was ' *Hari Hari jap le bande, nashwar jag sara*'. I sang it upto six in the morning, had a little rest and then begged leave of Bhagavanji. I left along with my two companions.

In the year 1958, my wife gave birth to a male child. When about a year old, it fell very ill one day. I dashed to Bhagavanji's at about 9 p.m and only kept on looking towards the Bhagavan as a suppliant (without uttering a word). He took out his right leg and placed it on the window-frame by his side; a little later he also took out his left leg and placed it alongside the right one. Looking towards me, he spoke these words (as if to himself) : "this child has to attend an urget business somewhere else; it can not linger here." After a while, I took leave of Bhagavanji and went back home when it was about 11 p.m. The child passed away only at midnight. My wife calmed down when I narrated to her what had passed between me and Bhagavanji.

In June 1961, I was hospitalized for the treatment of my duodenal ulcer; I underwent a surgical operation in the month of July 1961 and was discharged thereafter. My wife informed me that during the period of my hospitalization, she had called on Bhagavanji after every two or three days and obtained *bhasm* and *prasad* from him on each occasion, which she would give me in the hospital for my weal as a patient. She narrated further that one day she had wept bitterly before the Bhagavan. He had only looked towards her and said (as if talking to himself) : "The matser (meaning myself, the present writer), had a few-grains of *mong* (pulses) bequeathed to him by his mother, which are now exhausted. There is therefore no danger ahead." The meaning of his words was immediately clear to me : my mother had died of duodenal ulcer when I was just a year old. According to what Bhagavanji rightly divined, my mother's disease had 'passed on to me' and had to be suffered by me for the period I was hospitalized. His words were prophetic inasmuch as I was cured of the ulcer through the operation.

In the monh of August 1977, two army officers of the ranks of Colonel and Capt., came to see me at the Institute, accompanied by my disciple Shri Chunilal, who was employed in the Ordnance Depot., Badamibagh, Srinagar. The Colonel sought my help in having some items of drama and music rehearsed and performed in connection with the celebration of the Independence Day falling on the15th of August that year. Assisted by my disciple, I had the items practised by the participants concerned and rehearsed for the occasion for 3 to 4 days; they were presented by them on the 15th of August from 4 to 7 p.m. Then we had our dinner together. The Colonel offered me a glass of whisky which I declined, telling him that I had never tasted a drink all my life. He requested me to have just a little of it for the sake of company. I poured out almost the whole of whisky into the glass emptied by the Colonel (through his drinking), retaining only a few drops in my glass, that I diluted with water. While every one present drank to his fill, emptying glass after glass, I remained content with sipping the diluted stuff at intervals, to give the Colonel a feeling that I had given him company. After the big dinner was over, we left at 10 p.m driven home by a military jeep.

Within a few days of this event, my disciple Chunilal's wife fell very ill and in spite of treatment, did not recover. The doctors almost lost all hopes of her survival. I advised Chunilal to seek Bhagavanji's blessings; so we both called on him. Chunilalji pressed Bhagavanji's feet and after some time the Bhagavan gave him some *bhasm* wrapped in a piece of paper. He also spoke some words to him, which I did not 'catch'. Chunilal's wife got perfectly well within a few days with Bhagavanji's grace. After about a month, Chunilalji proposed to me that since his wife had recovered from a serious illness through Bhagavanji's *kripa* we should some day entertain him with our *bhajans*. I readily agreed and taking the tanpora etc. with us on a Friday, we went to Bhagavanji's at 10 p.m and bowed to him in his room. We found there Shri Ved Lal Vakil and his companion, Shri Badrinath Munshi, entertaining Bhagavanji with *sofiana* music to the accompaniment of *santoor*. As Vedlalji finished singing, he expressed happiness over my visit saying "now that Masterji has also come we shall enjoy singing heartily". We had our food; Vedlalji joined Bhagavanji in smoking the *chillum*. He then resumed Kashmiri *sofiana* singing. Meanwhile Bhagavanji tucked his legs under him, rested his head on the pillow to his right and fell asleep. Vedlalji continued singing till 2 p.m, but Bhagavanji would not wake up to the disappointment of the singer. As he finished singing, he said to me

despairingly, "Bhagavanji does not wake up and so smoking has stopped! Please begin your Shastri sangeet for a while". I took up the tanpora and started Mira's *bhajan* " *Paga gungru banda mira nachi re* " in the *rag Malkauns*. Just within a few minutes Bhagavanji woke up and looking towards me, filled the *chillum*. He puffed at it to his fill. The *bhajan* was over in about 40 minutes and then Bhagavanji passed on the *chillum* to me, asking me to smoke. I had only one puff and returned the *chiillum* to the Bhagawan, who in turn handed it over to Vedalalji. Then Bhagavanji took out a big bottle of whisky from behind the pillow and staring at me in anger said, "never again drink acid". I recalled the scene of carousal at Badamibagh (where the Colonel had wanted me to drink and I had just tasted a few drops) and realized why I was being admonished by Bhagavanji - that I should abstain from drinking in the interest of my well-being.

Again in the year 1966, the State Exhibition was about to start and I signed a contract for offering musical items at the Exhibition Theatre (without taking into account the full implications). When I came home, I realized I had committed a blunder in accepting the assignment. I did not consider whether it would be at all possible for me to take my young pupils, including girls, to the exhibition in the evenings and hold them there from 6 p.m to 8 p.m daily for a month so that they would participate in the programme. I was particularly apprehensive that the parents of my pupils, especiallly of the female ones, might feel annoyed and unhappy. But there was no help now as I had signed the contract. I turned inwardly to Bhagavanji and then presented myself to him later as a 'petitioner' in his 'august *darbar*' - called on him in all humility. The 'exhibition' problem was haunting my mind. Only within a few minutes Bhagavanji looked towards me smilingly and spoke words in a monologue which, rendered into english, would be - "there is nothing to worry. All will be well automatically". The exhibition started in a few days. I took my pupils in a Government van (who included 4-5 females) to the Exhibition grounds. The juniors sang a couple of songs in *chorus* and the senior male students presented *gazals*, *geets* and *bhajans*. It was now 8 p.m and the drama progamme was to follow. When we were about to leave back (seated in the van), a number of visitors, all youngsters including boys and girls, met me and offered to sing songs in the theatre as amateurs during the term of my assignment. I gave them a 'greeen signal' and they started coming from the next day itself. With the grace of Bhagavanji, the youngsters from among my pupils did not get their turn to sing. From the third day, the show was mostly run by the visitors and for the remaining period it was only my male students who would accompany me to the Exhibition. On the whole, the progamme was a complete success, thanks to the spontaneous co-operation extended to me by the visitors. The term of the exhibition was extended beyond one month but I did not sign any further contract. It is my firm conviction that I tided over the difficulty because of Bhagavanji's help. Thus the Prem Sangeeet Niketan and I, as its in-charge, were saved from an embarrassing situation.

On one Friday in the week of April, 1968, a man sent by Bhagavanji to my institute conveyed to me his word in response to which I, losing no time, proceeded to his residence accompanied by my two disciples as usual. It was 9 p.m and I found only 2 to 3 persons around Bhagavanji in his room. We had our food as desired by him and then I began Shastri sangeet. Bhagavanji himself did not have any food and remained busy with the *chillum*. I continued to sing till 2 a.m and then we had tea after which I resumed singing. At about 4 a.m, Bhagavanji, as was his habit, went down to the compound. He spent sometime in the toilet, washed his face etc. and came up. Then he tied his turban into the right shape on his head and put a vermilion mark on his forehead. Soon he began puffing at his chillum. I began my musical composition in the *rag 'Jogia'*, the *bol* being " *Jag jag jogia, moh jal maya tyag nindya* " - in *vilambit* (slow) and *durut* (fast) tunes. This continued till 6 a.m. As was my wont, I chose the time to take leave of Bhagavanji. Unlike the previous occasions, he declined my request (shaking his head in dissent), thus making it obligatory for me to continue singing. So I sang, '*Bairagi baba avo ghar ghar alakh jagavo*' in the *rag 'Bharagi Bhairav'*; this was my own *bol* / musical composition. As I finished the song at 7 a.m., I sought Bhagavanji's permission to leave. Meanwhile, pointing towards a *gadvi* (a metallic pot), Bhagavanji asked a lady to prepare *lassi;* my companions and I had a glassful of it each. He then took out some money from his pocket and sent someone to get bread for us from a baker's shop. We were persuaded by Bhagavanji to stay on and had our breakfast, that consisted of bread and tea.

We got some *prasad* from the Bhagavan and packing our things in a hurry, we left for our homes.

Just a few weeks or so after this last meeting of mine with Bhagavanji, I was going to my office on my bicycle one day at 9.30 a.m. As I reached Habbakadal, I heard people saying that the Sadguru had left his mortal frame. I turned back home, left my bicycle there and rushed to Bhagavanji's residence at Chandapora. I found a large congregation of people there. After the religious rites were performed, I joined thousands of devotees who formed themselves into a funeral procession that moved towards the cremation ground at Karan Nagar. I recalled how Bhagavanji had detained us at his residence till 8 a.m. when I sang for him last (on earlier occasions we had never stayed there beyond 6 a.m). In deviating from the normal practice, the Bhagavan had, I believe, given us an indication of his approaching *Mahasamadhi*!

I don't consider myself competent to say anything authoritatively about Bhagavanji's spiritual stature. With my limited intellect, I can only say as a believer that he was '*Ishwarsarup*', a *trikaldrashta yogi* of a high order. Yes, I found him different from innumerable other saints whom I met in Kashmir and the remaining parts of the country during my long career as a Shastri Sangeetkar (musician). Of all the saints with whom I spent nights devoted to music, I found Bhagavan Gopinath Ji, a *Gyani*, Mahatma and yogi of a category apart. Ordinary people do not appreciate Shastri Sangeet. On the other hand they have a ear for light and folk music. It is not merely the classical singer who is expected to have knowledge of *sur* (pitch) and *tal* (rhythm); the receptive listener invariably has some awareness/ knowledge of the niceties involved in music. How surprising that in the soltitude of night, when there would only be 2-3 persons in Bhagavanji's room, he remained absorbed in music and enjoyed listening to Shastri Sangeet for hours together and kept vigil. Of this aspect of his personality - his being an ardent lover of music - most devotees of Bhagavanji have been unaware. On the average, the Bhagavan would send someone to me twice every month and listen to my Shastri sangeet on Saturdays during night with just a few persons around. I rarely called on him during day-time.

From 1990-91, after I migrated to Jammu, I received invitation cards regularly from the Ashram at Udaiwala Bohri (Jammu) to attend various functions, which were delivered to me at the Govt. House, Tope Sherkhani, that I occupied alongwith my daughter. Since I shifted to my son's rented house at Subhash Nagar, such letters, bearing my earlier address, have not been reaching me in time (invariably reaching me after the event), depriving me thus of the opportunities of attending the functions held at the Ashram. Now I am physically unfit to move about though I continue to involve myself in selfless service - teaching a handful of learners preparing for B.A and M.A Music.

However, I continue to be registered as a devotee of Bhagavanji in the official records of the Bhagavan's Trust. And as his devotee, I am striving hard to attain inward peace through regular meditation on his holy feet. As a lover of music, having had the privilege of spending some precious hours of my life in the divine presence of the great Master, I take pride in considering myself an ordinary singer of his '*darbar*'.

In conclusion, I should like to say that I see the unseen hand of Bhagavanji in my being approached by Prof. A.N. Dhar for writing this article. I consider this veritably an instance of - say a confirmation of - divine prompting. I should add that Prof. Dhar too is fond of music, associated with the Prem Sangeet Niketan as a well-wisher.

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Quotations to Ponder

" A thing of beauty is a joy for ever. "

- Keats

" Heard Melodies are sweet
But those unheard are sweeter. "

- Keats

OF SAGES AND SAINTS - RAMBLES AT RANDOM

- Iqbal Nath Bakhshi

[We are indebted to the author - formerly an important Govt. functionary as Chief Engineer - for contributing this article in quick response to our request. Having never seen Bhagavanji in person, he writes about him convincingly in a manner that is remarkable. Shri Bakhshi is the youngest son of the celebrated writer, poet and scholar, Pt. Janakinath Bakhshi.]

IN THE COURSE OF human history, as far back as mind can go, there is one striking phenomenon that will not escape notice. Simply stated, it is the inevitable presence here, there and everywhere, of a sprinkling of extraordinary personages - whole and holy and endowed with warmth and wisdom, found coexisting with the multitude of errants and warts of the human race.

These inspired and pious souls, not many in number, are always there as if by a mysterious design - indeed as essential to man's being as the indispensable Sun is to his existence!

By their own living example rather than through any arbitrary precept or a drastic code, do these guiding stars and luminaries provide for us a much needed and durable value structure. Almost imperceptibly and without fanfare, a new direction is marked out by them for the individual who is swamped in ignorance and listlessly groping his way. And for mankind at large as well - now equipped with new perceptions - to follow and proceed along towards endless horizons. These distinguished souls may not always carry one right upto the portals of the ultimate Reality. But, what is more important, they do create in us an abiding appetite to know and explore what lies beyond ! With a new found fervour and aim, people thus begin to strive for excellence on discovering a definite purpose and meaning to life and find it worth living !

Unique in their own way, exalted and selfless to the core, these spiritual leaders and gifted guides are unusually possessed of both Vision and Valour ! Transparently simple in nature, do they, with their characteristic ease, effortlessly, capture the undefiled imagination of the mass of people around them. Again, through appropriate parables and telling stories, the underlying meaning of profound truths and aphorisms is revealed to lay minds. In a manner adept and in ways gentle, these venerable Masters are able to distil the essence of kingly secrets or sacred lore to bring home to rudderless souls what is of value permanent - the '*Shreyas*' (श्रेयस) - in contrast to the trash and ephemeral or the merely pleasant - the '*Preyas*' (प्रेयस)

श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च च मनुष्यमेत
स्तौ संपरीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः (कठोपनिषत्)
Shreyasch Preyasch Manusyamyeta -
Stou Sampareetya Vivinakhtidheerah

Thus we see a process of regeneration taking place gradually, yet surely, with an impact that is firm and lasting. In an atmosphere otherwise conspicuous for its contrary tendencies and unhealthy predispositions one finds oneself invested with a new hope under the influence of these pioneers !

To these shining lights, therefore, humanity has reason enough to remain indebted. Verily, mankind owes its very survival to such sages ! Glory be to them, these saints and seers and mystics who deign to appear in our midst from time to time to help and guide man in his quest of Truth.

To be able to recognize and meet with a holy man, seen invariably enveloped with a glowing aura, is a sight for sore eyes ! With a halo of effulgence attending on his august presence, the Saint exudes a warmth and nearness and a charm all its own that is at once inspiring as it is benign and soothing ! In their lives sublime, saints kindle in us an awakening that will not let us forget that immortality is our ultimate destiny, as by God preordained!

Thus stirred up with their magnetic touch, we experience a new awareness and undergo a transformation that is marked by an inescapable yearning for a state of liberation and eternal bliss ! This restful destination is verily earmarked for one and all. Even they who appear to barely crawl, must as a constitutive component of existence itself and in obedience to a governing law that prevails, come

to the top one day ! a la -

ज़रे का भी चमकेगा सितारा
कायिम जो ज़मीनो आसमां है ।

Zarey ka bhi chamkega sitara
Qayim Jo Zamin-o-Asman hai !

No doubt that we suffer from an inborn, almost a natal compulsion to gradually move up the ladder of evolution. In that scheme we have perhaps no freedom or choice ! Yet this lofty design is attainable only with the grace of the Guru and an all-caring and kind Providence that loves us more than we can love ourselves. It has graciously gifted to us as an inseparable concomitant woven into the fabric of a perennial life and birth process itself, a motive force in the form of a wondrous urge within us which must need blossom out one day, at the appropriate time and appointed hour, into Self-Realization - the Supreme purpose of human existence !

And lest we should slow down on this course to our predetermined tryst, engrossed as we are struggling with our infirmities through our brief sojourn here, we have mercifully been granted yet another bonus in the shape of seers and saints. Their one mission is, of course, an unceasing concern for the advancement and uplift of man and his overall welfare and, besides, to supplement his spiritual deficits and depressions. Happily for us, the onward march on this path to evolution and a life Divine is further accomplished by coming into contact with these remarkable teachers. They are a sure help to overcome the many hurdles and apprehensions that assail the pilgrim's progress. Grace pours out from these great Masters unasked, unsought ! And this is manifested in the form of clear signs and signals that one receives from time to time as even the last lingering doubts get systematically resolved.

One such outstanding saint-saviour, a 'rar a-avis' as his devoted body of admirers will tell us, is our Shri Bhagavan Gopinath Ji Maharaj, whose sacred birth centenary is being celebrated this year as a token of deep gratitude to the Master.

That he was one of the rarest of gems, pure and serene as the vast expanse of the skies and the deep oceans, one in a million - a la Avatar - one of God's true princes gifted to this generation of seekers, is amply borne out by the saga of his own quest in search of Truth and the dizzy heights of spiritual eminence that he scaled. Verily of such a one has it been said -

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये
यतताम् च सहस्राणाम् कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति ततवतः ।।

Manushyanam Sahasreshu Kaschidyatati Sidaya Yatatam Cha Sahasranam Kaschinmam Veti Tatvatah

We understand that his early life has been distinguished by a very hard and intense *Sadhanaa.* Full of struggles that only went to sharpen his resolve and further steel him in his determination, there was nothing to stop him reach the goal he had set forth to achieve. This was a period of deep contemplation. As a natural corollary to his immense labours, he developed a prodigious strength to persevere through his penances and a tenacity to continue fervently with his spiritual practices. And this finally led to, as it should, a state of ceaseless awareness of the Infinite !

Fulfilled in himself and in a state of perfect Peace he stood out like a beacon light now ripe and ready for that penultimate engagement of the '*Bodhi Satava*' viz. a loving service to one and all. Now prepared and ready to go and give to the world of what he had earned for himself after continuous striving ! Completely transformed himself, it was his turn to bring about a change in the many seekers who swarmed to his presence and opened their minds to receive his grace - each according to his or her own desserts - a la

यह बज़्म में है यां कोताह दस्ती में है महरूमी ।
जो बढ कर खु:द उठाले, हाथ में मीना उसी का है ।।

Yeh Bazm Mai Hai, Yahn Kotah Dasti May Hai Mehroomi
Jo Barh Kar Khud Uthaley, Haath Mey Meena Ussi Ka Hai !

And this was the time when in the flush of a fresh prize discovery amog their own ilk, people flocked to him irresistably and went on to apotheosize him — perhaps against his own will ! But then his was no ordinary state and people could not but feel drawn to him and be impressed with his entire bearing and deportment. He was there to be divinized! Undoubtedly he answered eloquently to the description of one who epitomized all godly qualities that our Lord has spoken of -

अभयं सत्वसं शुद्धिः ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ।

Abhayam Satvasamshudhih Gyana-Yogavyavasthitih

Danam Damasch Yagyasch Swadhyayas Tapa Aarjavam

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधः त्यागाः शान्तिरपै शुनम् ।
दया भूते ष्वलोलुप्त्वं, मार्दवं हीरचापलम् ।।

Ahimsa Satyam Akrodhah Tyagah Shantirapaishunam
Daya Bhuteshvaaloluptvam Mardavam Hrirachapalam

Truly, as it may be safely affirmed, he had become Divine and soared to the very source of life and light, love and peace. His whole countenance, as his ardent devotees and disciples would vouchsafe and declare, bloomed with unmistakable Divine attributes that stood out as shining strands in the rich tapestry of his spiritual life. Ever harmonized and dwelling in the 'Absolute' *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, he had merged with the all-pervading expanse of space that envelops all objects and perceptions. His had truly become a glorious state of egolessness. Which is exceptionally as true of my own Master and Gurudev Parmahansa Shri Swami Ramdas Ji Maharaj of Anandashram, Kerala, a colossus in his own right in the grand spiritual empire. In his usual native state of ceaseless ecstasy, he speaks thus about this highest experience before which, to quote his own words, " even the loftiest love stands aghast! In this context I feel happy to share with the reader the delight of a superb little poem from his own mighty pen :

In the Infinite Silence of the Soul
everything is naught ....;
It is beyond the utmost depths of the mind;
It is eternal rest, repose and peace.
The Loftiest, the sweetest love stands
Aghast before that august Presence;
Even it has no entry in that mysterious realm.
What then is mind ? What then is love ?
Mind is movement in darkness
Love is movement in light.
But the great Truth is beyond both.
It transcends thought, name, form, movement,
Change, time, space, causation.
One sole Reality - one sole Existence.

Mention may be made in this context, of another profound star of amazing brilliance and originality. Standing out prominently in the galaxy of distinguished Maharishis, Parmahans Shri Swami Gaibananda Ji Maharaj whom I had the good fortune to know at close quarters, was truly an ocean of knowledge and compassion. Of him it could safely be said that what he did not know, was not worth knowing ! Indeed a master of all trades, spiritual. His entire life was like a poem vibrating with bliss and ecstasy. His touch was truly infectious. Whosoever came to him with an unbiased mind, returned rewarded and transformed - thenceforth straight there on the right path! To venture another observation, mention may be made of his especial inclination for *Ahimsa* (non violence) and *Vairagya* (Renunciation) as indispensable tools in the armour of the seeker. That is not to say, however, that he did not commend Bhakti or devotion with equal emphasis as a sure means in one's spiritual pursuit. Bhakti and love, he would extol to the skies as superior means, most useful. Once, upon being asked what he thought of Bhakti marg, Swami Ji at once replied:-

अरे वह तो हवाई जहाज़ की सवारी से तुरन्त पहुंचा देने वाला साधन है ...ण्ण्ण्ण..

meaning it is the speediest means to reach one's destination ! Striking a solemn posture of complete humility and prayerfulness, he would occasionally sing to us in his melodious and tender voice -

प्रेम भक्ति गुरू दीजिये, विनवौ कर जौरी ....
and again

चरन कमल छूटै नहीं, निसदिन करूँ ध्याना
दास भाव उर में रहे, जब तक घट प्राणा ....

Once when approached with a few searching questions Swami Ji shot back a peice of profound instruction remarkable for its content as for its manner of expression and simplicity:

आत्म चिन्तन ही महा तप है
उत्थान है भवसागर की नाव है
मुक्ति का सरल मार्ग है
छोटे बडे सभी के लिए एक ही साधन है
राजमार्ग है, जीवन का सार है
मनुष्य जीवन का उद्देश्य है
साधन साध्य दोनों है
मनुष्यों का प्राणाधार है
सन्तों का विश्राम स्थल है
ज्ञानियों का सर्वस्व है
संसार जेल से निकलने का एक मात्र चोडा द्वार है

भव कूप से निकलने की सीडी है

[an excerpt]

Another admired and inspiring piece is quoted from his "Anandullas" —-

भगवान को भजता हुआ, भगवान ही मैं बन गया ।
भगवान मुझ में मिल गया, भगवान में मैं सन गया।
अभिमान ही अज्ञान था, वह बर्फ ढेला गल गया ।
उस सिंधु सच्चिदानन्द में, मैं एक हो कर रल गया।

Likewise an excerpt from another of his beautiful compositions in the vein of an exhortation, a call to the seeker to wake up will bear mention :

वेला अमृत भया फिर भी सो रहा बन अभागा
साथी सारे जगे, तू न जागा ।

The circle of his admirers grew larger and larger and so also his spiritual influence. He felt obliged to establish over half a dozen spiritual centres located in the North, East, Central and Western India for the benefit of his devotees. He has authored over a dozen treatises dealing with specific subjects and experiences that throw profuse light on the spiritual, verily tasting and nourishing like mother's own milk for the aspirant ! On several occasions I had a chance to observe how he would induce many a devotee into a state of *samadhi* with a mere touch of his finger or by placing his hand on the deovtees' head ! How it filled one with feelings of deep reverence for the Master !

Such then are these supermen, blessed saints and sages like Bhagavan Gopinath Ji Maharaj, Parmahans Sri Swami Gaibaananda Ji, Parmahans Sri Swami Ramadas Ji Maharaj affectionately called Papa. All of them have a common message to convey for mankind - Universal love and service and brotherhood of man ! Such persons are rare - an antidote mercifully provided by kind Providence to defeat the poison produced by the wicked and the vicious, the evil and the arrogant ! A striking contrast to the riff-raffs of the political estate and their lamentable contributions - *ad nauseum*. And our saviours truly are only these saints and sages who show us the light and bring about a much wanted transformation in society where not hatred but harmony, where not arrogance but humility reigns and welfare of all "सर्व भूत हिते रतः" is the watchword ! Verily saints are for ever!

• • • •

I must add a few words of gratitude and apology to my friend and brother, Prof. A.N. Dhar, whom I hold in much affection and esteem.

Actually, he is my prompter in doing this little tribute to one whom I have never had a chance to meet, physically. But so telling has been the force of Prof. Dhar's rhetoric in praise of 'Bhagavan Ji' that I felt irresistably involved in this welcome task - conscious though all through, of my own flickering lights to even hold my pen to paper.

To write on a subject on which, admittedly, there is no dearth of scriptural fare already available to us in good measure, naturally gives me a feeling of sneaking guilt ? It follows, therefore, that it ought to be none of a mere nobody's business (such as mine !) to commit an outrage on propriety and delve into a field so sacrosanct. Hence this apology for my 'rambles at random' - especially in an area where, after all, I am not so well qualified to enter.

Yet is not 'Bhagavanji' only my Gurudev Himself in this present form ? So thinking, have I felt drawn to join the ranks of the many devotees and admirers - whose number is legion - to pay my respectful homage and tribute to the Master. I have also felt that all the while he was holding me by the hand whispering to me the assurance that is meant for the sake of the rabble, the tagrag and bobtail such as I :

मूकं करोति वाचालं ....

I have loved Thee with two types
of love - one selfish, and the
other worthy of Thee.
As for the first, when I sit in Thy
remembrance, I want Thee all to
myself to the exclusion of others.
As for the one which is worthy of
Thee, therein Thou lift the veil
that I may see Thee.

- Rabi'a Basri

Bhagavanji : The Great Siddha

- V. N. Drabu

[We are grateful to the author for this fine article on Bhagavanji. He wrote it in response to our special request. Dr. Drabu's observations are both original and erudite]

WHAT HAS IMPRESSED ME the most is the serenity and the catholicty (*sarvabhavmata*) of a figure whom I have never known or met even once in my life-time. An *Amitabha* reborn, the cosmic eye of this *Siddha*, popularly known as Bhagavanji or as Kashmiris would lovingly call him *'Gupabab'* (the beloved), exudes confidence and a ray of hope in this turmoil-ridden and strife-torn world. In the dense darkness and the doubts that assail us from every quarter, we turn to him for refuge and guidance. The battlefield of our life is such where duty, morality, fear and grief become hopelessly entangled. We continue to remain in a state of confusion and moral ambivalence despite the legacy of the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* that appeal even to the atheists. Perhaps we miss the treasure and fail to notice how the *Guru-Gita* (a constant companion of Bab Maharaj) had left an indelible mark on a self-realized soul as great as Bhagavan Gopinath Ji (the *Siddha*), throwing him into rapture and ecstasy. And how strange it is that an average Kashmiri is in near total bondage to the material side of life! It is not that we have delinked ourselves from the *Gita* or given up the Guru tradition (*parampara*). What we have really missed is the spirit of the *antarmukhi siddha* (the siddha turned inwards) and the way to introspecion. We see the *Gita* through a veil of worldly attachments, unable to pull ourselves out of their intoxicating embrace. We take the *Guru* as our mascot to relieve us of our worldly afflictions. While the Master, in keeping with the non-ascetic tradition of renunciation of the land of *sarada* virtually retires from life, we are so bound to it as to keep our shop (*makan*) open and unable to decide where to leave the keys of our sense organs (*indriya - samucha*). A true mystic that our Bhagavanji is, his very image brings out with great subtlety the dichotomy between man's lethal attraction for a *kamini* and *kanchini* (carnal pleasure) and his need for God (*theek thek ratun Bhagavan, sui gau nirvan*). He envisioned for the world a spiritual democracy so distinct from a materialist democracy. The freedom of the spirit or the self was the ultimate goal to usher in the dawn of freedom from ignorance, freedom from parochial caste, and freedom from slavery to custom to which each *jivatma* should contribute, to experience the light Divine. And so, instead of seeing the Master as some *miracle-man*, we see him as the Redeemer of Mankind, to drive home to the bound *jiva* the true essence of life. The gods may not listen to him; they have other things to do; they cannot attend to the pleas of every suppliant who dares to raise his cares to heaven. But Bhagavanji does listen and act. He animates. He shifts one's blind faith in beliefs to a readier acceptance of reality. An earnest suppliant/ *sadhaka* is made to feel that life is not made after our dreams or through "the right of desire". He indirectly (through his vibrations) offers a solution through which to view the world of man and its limitations and move on the right path, to understand the hollowness of one's "intense desire for material possession". With a greater role assigned to the Master is His appearance on the various battlefields to turn the attention of the warring enemies to look to the self within, the universal spirit embodied in harmony rather than hatred and discord that divide man from man. There is perhaps a streak of wonder or admiration or both at this commonly expressed reverence for a *Siddha* who, in his astral body, manifests himself from time to time.

What keeps him alive ? What did he stand for ? And what is the relevance of his message, if he had any to communicate to us? "The past never disappears in India" in the words of Anita Desai. Tradition has proved a far stronger bond to keep us together and the country united than the concept of a Westminister style of democracy. Our Bhagavanji is a link in that hoary tradition. Steeped in his *sadhana* of the Mother, he must keep alive the tradition of the other *Siddhas*. The *dhooni* or the fire-place to which he offers the oblations of dried fruit, etc., is, in fact, the symbol of the self. It is the external way of worshipping the Almighty by offering the *ahuties*.

This reminds us of the legendary Kashmiri Brahman who, when invited to Lord Krishna's *rajasuya yajna*, instead of offering the *ahuti* to *Agni*, offered it to himself. Flames arise from all sides of the place of sacrificial fire resonant with *svaha* (well offered) and the recitation of the Vedas starts. "The self is Agni," say the Vedas. "Its manifestation is the Sun which consumes everything." Bhagavanji thus symbolizes the essence of the Vedas in his day-to-day life, keeping the chain of the Vedic *rsis* unbroken. There is continuity in thought and practice, the true *jnana marga* (*sat*). The luminous self shines in its full splendour. Wasn't Bhagavanji projecting the self into that *dhooni*? Thus when we think of the self and that *Agni* : there is one to one correspondence.

A word about the vibrations from the different limbs of his body, which obviously points to the natural practice of his *sahaja yoga*. Sending these externally suggests the subtlest *nada* (vibration) in the spinal cord. The *spanda* (throb / vibration) shows that it is ' I am there existing'. If there were not spanda of the self there would be no correspondence with the universal self. *Spanda* may thus be regarded as the psychic quality of the self, a vibration, a throb. Krishnamurti experiences it as some sort of energy surging towards the head (*sirsa / sahasrara*), cutting his deep roots and renewing him daily.[1] Some scholars are of the opinion that Bhagavanji was in *Shambhavi* or *Brahmi-avastha*, which would imply his direct communion with the Highest Self. We cannot, however, adopt any such contrivance that would only entangle us in the grip of *maya*, measuring in space and time, both of which are transcended by a *Siddha*.

The clay smoking-pipe (*chillum*) symbolized the acme of all the different vibrations referred to in various treatises on *yoga*. It seems that Bhagavanji could pracise all the 118 *dharanas* laid down in the *Malinivijayottara Tantra* and *Vijnanbhairava*. The dazzling flame of his *chillum* suggests how the luminous self shone with all its brilliance, worship merging in the worshipped. It is said that it was a rare favourite offering (*prasada*) to the recipient blessed by the Master, who, on such occasions, manifested himself as the Light of Pure Consciousness and would pass on *bhasma* (sacred ash) from his *chillum* to one well-advanced in the path of self-realization or to one in distress whose particular virtue deserved him his compassion. The image of the Master, in particular, strikes certain very uncommon features, not usually taken note of by his adherents or devotees. The spotless white turban known in Kashmiri as *safa* or *usnisa* stands for enlightenment and is the symbol of *bodhi* (light of intelligence). I am told that Bhagavanji would regularly wash his face and thereafter tie his turban and apply a *saffron-tilak* on his forehead. Both *usnisa* (the protruberance of the Buddha) and the *tilak* corresponding to the tuft of hair in the middle of the Buddha's eye-brows signify complete self-realization and purity and are in keeping with the tradition of the *Siddhas* of Kashmir, 'the heart of Mystic Asia'. Even in my own life-time I have observed almost all Kashmiri Pandits strictly adhering to this practice of tying a turban around their head and applying a *saffron-tilak* to their foreheads during the course of their *pooja* (worship) in their private places of worship (*thakur kuth*). *Vaisadeva* or offering to Agni constituted an essential ingredient of their daily worship.

The Master seems to have used his iron-tongs as a tool of Mother's Shakti to transform an earnest aspirant's sadhana according to his or her level of attainment from *saguna* (with a form) to *nirguna* (formless), transmuting the ego in the fire of consciousness or to chase away the evil of the evil-doers and thus acting the role of a *bhaisajya-guru* (the Teacher of Healing). May be it was used to ward off the fear of the life-terminator, Death (*Yama*), with his throng of evil perpetrators. The Master, moved by great compassion, strives to perfect himself in the necessary virtues *(paramitas)* for this task. He willingly continues in the turbulent world of transmigratory existence in order to serve others. This ideal the *Siddhas* of Kashmir claimed to be more social and admirable than the ideal of the *Sarvastivadin* Conservatives, which they regarded as selfish and narrow. The Bhagavan seems to have taken a vow, promising salvation to all those who call upon Him (the Lord). In the highest attainment of *Siva* - Consciousness the entire universe appears as the attributeless "I" or Siva. Through this I - Consciousness one knows one's real nature and helps others to know theirs. The Master thus helps a true *sadhaka* to identify himself with the universal stream of Consciousnes from which he considers himself cut off due to his innate ignorance or *anavamala*.

It is in this context that we have to understand the Master's emphasis on *shozar*, *pazar* and *sezar*. *Shozar* (purity), would obviously refer to *cittasuddhi*; *Pazar*

would include steadfastness, adherence to truth (*rta*), absolute renunciation or *tyaga* (freedom from senses). *Sezar* would comprehend simplicity, rectitude (*arjava*) and sincerity. This is the true penance (*tapas*) through which alone the task of divinity is fulfilled and the Master's role in his disciples consummated (*paramagati*). This is the true investment the emblems of which lie embedded in *shozar*, *pazar* and *sezar* of what Bhagavanji would sometimes give a hint to his devotees. The Master thus appears to have diagnostically described the malady affecting us in the absence of what has been referred to here as the way to the fulfilment of the self. In seeking to rise, one has to re-discover oneself and to keep the disruptive forces at bay. What is recommended is not the tradition of ascetic renunciation or the formulation of some rituals but to be ever wakeful to watch the awareness of the self, with all our keys handled with utmost care.

Whatever the occult powers of Bhagavanji, it is certain that he sees and hears those who are suffering and need his help. To quote Bhagavanji "I am *akasa* or space or what Lalla called '*gagan tsuy bhutal tsuy* ..."[2] He is infinity ... the One without beginning or end, the refuge of the lonely and lost. He is a celestial being that incarnates himself. He is but one manifestation of the primordial Being, the eternal, cosmic *Siddha* who appears variously in many worlds in order to make known what the wise call *rta* or *dharma* (truth). As the embodiment of the union of *siva* and *sakti*, he is *Omkara*, the Light Divine, the Cosmic energy that pervades in its subtlest form even the tiniest particles of the Cosmos, wherefore the 'All is one with my own self'. The Master has no ritual bath, no ascetic practice. The Beloved *Bab* in a vision of oneness, turned inward, has the harmonious celebration of sacrifice (in the form of *Agni*), with his gaze wide open, meditating and deeply rejoicing within. We witness a striking phenomenon of the dynamic aspect of the highest reality *Parasakti* and its static aspect of *Paramsiva* in our Beloved.

His Consciousness of the Supreme self did not bind him to space and time. It is said that persons even in far off places would get help from Him in their spiritual *sadhana*.

1. This experience has been amply elucidated by Krishnamurti in the book titled 'Krishnamurti's note - book'. For one year he penned down the effect of this energy on his body and mind. Shri Ramakrishna Parmahansa has also given details of the same energy, penned down by M. in the Biography of Ramakrishna.
2. For the translation of the full sloka see Jaya Lal Kaul, *Lal Ded* (Sahitya Academy, New Delhi , 1975) p.111.

" The main task of Siddha Yoga is to unfold fully the God-consciousness which lies hidden in all human beings. It culminates in the experience of 'I am that' - the experience of our identity with God - and in the attainment of our inner joy. Siddha Yoga destroys our negativities; it removes the dullness and lack of clarity of our minds; and it eradicates the differences among religions, people and colours. By respecting all, Siddha Yoga dispels the hatred that continually arises in the world."

- ***Swami Muktananda***

" He whose conquest cannot be conquered again, into whose conquest no one in this world enters, by what track can you lead him, the Awakened, the Omniscient, the trackless? "

*from the **Dhammapda***

Bhagavan Gopinath Ji
As I saw Him

– P. N. Kaul **'Poshamot'**

The valley of Kashmir, considered a "paradise on earth" has also the distinction of being called a *rishibhoomi* - the abode of spiritual seers. Many consider it the abode of "*Shiv Shakti*", "Mother" of Shaivism together with the treasure of *Shakth* doctrine. The land is also famous as the seat of *Mata Sharda*, Goddess of learning and wisdom. This is justified by the fact that through its long cultural history, Kashmir has given birth to many creative thinkers and philosophers, including sages and saints, whose contribution to spiritual thought has been considerable and significant.

The life and cultural pattern of the people of Kashmir, as also the socio-religious aspects of their living, have throughout been influenced by men of spiritual eminence (irrespective of what religion, caste or creed they belonged to or what language they spoke). The contribution made by Shri Abhinava Gupta, Lalleshwari and Nunda Rishi to our spiritual heritage, during a few centuries of the past, provides a notable illustration of this influence - a fact universally acknowledged by the world community on the basis of published materials.

In the present century, Shri Bhagavan Gopinathji, whose birth centenary is being celebrated in Jammu and Kashmir as also at several other places in the country and abroad, is recognized as a saint of extra-ordinary spiritual stature. His impact on devotees has been colossal and over-bearing, felt intensely even after he left his mortal coil. The unification of *ATMAN* with *PARMATMAN* and the "Ultimate mergence" with the Divine are usually reflected in the life-style of men of spirituality of the highest order. In my humble capacity as a seeker in the vast realm of Divinity, I had the good fortune of meeting a man of such spiritual eminence, Bhagavan Gopinathji, at Gadood-Bagh, Habbakadal, Srinagar (Kashmir) in the year 1960.

The word "*Bhagavan*" prefixed to the name of the sage had aroused curiosity in my mind and I was very eager to see the spiritual giant in person, cultivate contact with him and find out for myself the difference between an average saint and a fully "*Awakened Atman*", having achieved mergence with the Ultimate. Full of curiosity, as I entered Bhagavanji's room, I experienced a thrilling sensation. Bhagavanji looked absorbed inwardly in a state of spiritual bliss. The environment around the sage was one of perfect peace and spiritual calm, which I felt to be the tranquillity of ***Samvit Bhav*** perceived sometimes as a halo of Divine light. For me this experience was an extra-ordinary one , that I had not had earlier while meeting any other saint. What I report hereinafter will make my experience more explicit .

The atomosphere in Bhagavanji's room seemed to me charged by the blissfull state he was in and the spell-casting light emanating from the great saint. I experienced an indescribable vibration associated with the repeated chanting of "***Om***", intercepted sometimes by the puffs from the Bhagavan's *chillum*. I felt as if the Mahamantra was piercing my nerves. Dressed in the typical Kashmiri *pheran*, wearing a big white *turban* on his head, Bhagavanji was glowing with the divine light and the *jap* of "*Om*".

On the Bhagavan's right-hand side, there was an iron tray containing self-consuming burning splinters of wood, devoid of smoke, seeming like a *dhooni*, producing fine, silvery *bhasm* (ash) that looks very attractive. On the left side of the saint, I was surprised to see a *toor* (a Kashmiri utensil made of alloy) containing minced mutton of scarlet read colour (with an ingredient of Kashmiri red pepper, also spiced as was revealed by the fragrance emitted) - considered in Kashmir a delicacy .

After I noticed the minced mutton cooked as a dish, I could not mentally reconcile Bhagavanji's spirituality to the non-vegetarian dish. While I was pondering over this, a group of four *sanyasins* wearing saffron-coloured garments, enetred the room and sat by my side. The saints looked spellbound by the charged atmosphere of the room and it was obvious to me that inwardly they were offering respects to Bhagavanji, who picked up four one-

rupee coins and gave one coin to each of the *sanyasins*. The coins had been offered to Bhagavanji by a devotee and the Bhagavan lost no time in doling them out to the saints (retaining nothing with himself). The jap of 'Om', was meanwhile, continuing and the environment was very soothing - the impact of it was all pleasant, felt as a delectable sensation along the nerves (by me as a recipient as others too must have felt it).

The riddle of the non-vegetarian dish and the sanctified atmosphere of the room was still bothering my mind. I was trying mentally to perceive a possible connection between the two seemingly irreconcilable things. After a few moments, Bhagavanji expressed that the *simha* (lion), the *vahan* of the Divine Mother, is also to be served well. This He spoke in a casual way. However, I got the clue and tried to analyze its implication.

Still inquisitive, in all humility, I looked towards the sage and to my utter surprise I could observe the Divine Mother (in full form) seated on the *simha* (lion) on one side, while a powerful glow of light emanated from the seat of Bhagavanji. This continued for a few moments. After I had collected myself (having felt spell-bound by the sight), I could now realize the full import of Bhagavanji's utterance - thart the *simha* too had to be served well. All this experience convinced me of Bhagavanji's loftiness as a saint - his Ultimate mergence with *PARMATMAN*.

My curiosity was over once for all and my mind was free from doubts - the incompatibility of non-vegetarianism and spirituality was resolved for me and I could understand Bhagavanji's *lila* (divine 'sport'). With profound respect and in absolute humility I saluted the sage again and again, realizing that he had attained "*Samvit Bhav*".

To further elucidate my point, I offer a simple illustration : as long as water is the component of the main stream, it is devoid of any colour, smell and impurity (pollution). It is pure and fresh. If a quantity of water is separated from the main stream and stored in a pot, it is apt to become stale and get polluted, even acquire a characteristic smell (of staleness), making it unfit for use or drinking. But once this very water of the pot gets merged with the main stream involving the union of the part with the whole, all traces of colour, odour and staleness vanish, thereby making it pure and pollution-free. On the basis of this analogy, we can explain the state of *jivatman* as a limited being and its liberated state after mergence with the *Parmatman*. Precisely, Bhagawanji had attained full mergence with the divine through his *Sadhana*; he had conquered his little self and attained *SAMVIT BHAV* - mergence with the divine Mahashakti.

Having got a feel of Bhagavanji's lofty spiritual state, I got absorbed in devotion to Him and understood the full significance of the word '*Bhagavan*' prefixed to his name Gopinath. I was convinced that people were right in calling him 'Bhagavan'.

Finally as I got up with folded hands, I saluted the holy 'charana padh' of Bhagavanji, who repeatedly murmured ' *"theek theek ratun Bhagavan. suy gav nirvan"*, meaning "hold fast to Bhagavan aright, that will lead you to Nirvan". Thus all my doubts and illusions were gone, and I got proper and revealing answers to the questions that had baffled me.

My salutations to the great saint Bhagavanji, who will always be revered and remembered by not only the people of Kashmir but by mankind in general!

The Pearl

A rain drop, dripping from a cloud, was ashamed when it saw the sea. 'Who am I where there is a sea?' it said. When it saw itself with the eye of humility, a shell nurtured it in its embrace.

- Saadi of Siraza

How I Came to Bhagavanji and What He Means to Me

[Given below are excerpts of varying length from the essays on the above topic, that were written in advance and presented by some of the senior devotees and a sizeable number of junior ones (boys and girls) on the occasion of the first Navratra (*Navreh*) celebrated as an annual event at the Bhagavan Gopinath Ji Asharm, Udaiwala, Bohri, Jammu on the 8th of April, 1997. The function was presided over by Shri J. N. Kachru, retired Principal, National High School, Srinagar and the following acted as the judges :

1. Prof. J. N. Sharma
2. Prof. A.N. Dhar
3. Prof. O. N. Chrungoo

The names of the participants who bagged prizes are given in the order of merit they secured :

Senior Group : 1. Dr. Roshan Lal Saraf
2. Shri A.K. Parimoo
3. Shri Sudhir Zutshi

Junior Group : 1. Shivani Raina
2. Reema Kaul
3. Manu Bhat

Some consolation prizes were also given to the deserving.

- A. N. Dhar]

1. In the wake of the mass-exodus of our communtiy from the valley of Kashmir, I wandered in search of a Guru from place to place. I met many a saint but could not come across the Guru of my choice. Fortunately for me, on an auspicious day, a revered relative of mine said to me, "Why don't you visit the Bhagavan's Ashram and seek his blessings?" The word "Bhagavan" touched my inner being, releasing a current of energy that had remained dormant within me. A sweet sensation passed through my whole physical frame and my restless mind started calming down. I wondered if the mere mention of the name 'Bhagavanji' could both thrill me and calm me down so potently, how blessed should I feel in the presence of His image in the Ashram here. In the valley of Kashmir I had never got an opportunity to see the Bhagavan in person and touch his holy feet. However, he had blessed me with his blissful '*darshan*' in my meditation. What this vision had meant to me in spiritual terms could hardly be matched even by the impact Shri Fotedar's account of Bhagavanji's "miracles" had on me. The vision had wrought a miraculous transformation within me.

I soon came to realize the great value of the holy name "Bhagavanji". One of my dearest kins was suffering from an eye-ailment that was almost incurable. Five long years' medical treatment had proved altogether futile and the ailment had persisted. Eventually, the miracle did happen and the dearest one I was concerned about was cured. How did the miraculous cure come about ? One day the words my relative had addressed to me, "Why don't you visit the Bhagavan's Ashram?" echoed in my mind. The physican Supreme, Bhagavan Gopinathji, was yet to apply his healing touch to the patient. He appeared in my meditation and assured me that the ailing eye would be cured without fail. Then the magic started working. The patient attended the Bhagavan's Ashram daily (without a break) in the early morning bowing to his image with intense devotion and in a spirit of total self-surrender. Only within two months the ailing eyes

became almost normal. Being myself a doctor by profession, I could realize what Bhagavanji's *kripa* had done for the faithful patient; it became evident to me that no human treatment can match the healing touch of the Divine.

(Dr. R. L. Saraf)

2. It was till September 1991 that Bhagavanji, I feel, kept me away from Him. I shall elaborate hereinafter what I mean to say. On one of the days of September, 1991 (I can't recall the exact date), which proved to be an auspicious and momentous day of my life, an ardent devotee of Bhagavanji prevailed upon me to attend the *Arti* of the adorable Guru at the Ashram, at Udaiwala, Jammu. Since I lacked faith in saints then, I thought the visit would at least provide me an opportunity to get acquainted with the members of my community, which could be a gain in itself. However, as I attended the *Arti*, the *bhajans* sung in praise of Bhagavanji by the congregation sounded pleasant to my ears and I felt inwardly drawn to the Bhagavan. Onwards, I turned into a believer and regularly participated in the evening prayer meetings held at the Ashram.

I also started performing the *Arti* of Bhagavanji regularly in the morning at my home. My *pooja* included *japa* - chanting mentally the holy name of Bhagavan Gopinathji, which gave me immense peace, and also relief from anxieties. I felt a change taking place within myself. Was it happening in response to the Holy Master's prompting or was it an awakening that owed itself to my past spiritual *sanskars* ? I felt reassured somehow that Bhagavanji's influence was operating on me unmistakably. I was surely making progress as a spiritual seeker, being led from earning to learning, from darkness to light, from passion to dispasson and ignorance to knowledge. Of course, my progress was slow and steady, and I could sense the impact for sure.

One morning I did not get up in time to perform my *pooja* at home. In my deep sleep, I felt a slight touch on my forehead and then in a flash, saw Bhagavanji's figure close to myself, whispering these words into my ear in Kashmiri : "*Arti chai na karni* ?" (Haven't you to perform the *Arti*?). I lost no time in getting up, and then attended to the *Arti*.

On Bhagavanji's Mahajayanti in 1993, I stayed at the Ashram for the night. At a late hour, the ladies present there, when they were in a hightened state of mind, recited this line in Kashmiri in chorus : " *daran osuy su shiva sund roop*" (He would assume Shiva's form). A doubt arose in my mind whether this was true of Bhagavanji : "Did he really assume Lord Shiva's form for his devotees?" The selfsame moment all my doubt was gone when I noticed the photograph of Bhagavanji that stood in front of me, transformed into that of Lord Shiva in the familiar posture with locked hair, body smeared with ashes and serpent around his neck. The splendid *darshan* lasted a few seconds.

One evening in October 1993 (again I don't quite remember the exact date) I was not well but I didn't miss the *Arti* at the Ashram. Running temperature and my body aching, I left the Ashram as the *Arti* was over and realized that I was not fit enought to walk back home. My thoughts turned to the Bhagavan for help - how I wished someone gave me a lift in his car so that I could reach my home comfortably. Within a few moments, a car stopped where I stood; the man driving it generously offered to pick me up, requesting me to take the back seat. After some hesitation (those were the days when accepting lifts in the vehicles of strangers was particularly considered risky in view of militancy), I boarded the car. The driver, after the car had covered some distcance, enquired of me wherefrom I had come. "From the Asharam of my Guru Deva", I said in response. He replied: " Too much elevated is your Guru. Before I saw you, some one whispered to me three times, 'Give him a lift upto Talab Tiloo", I was wonder-struck, and felt overjoyed that Bhagavanji had answered my prayer. All this should make it obvious to any one what Bhagavanji means to me. He means to me what Sri Krishna meant to Arjuna or Shri Rama to Lakshman.

(A. K. Parimoo)

3. Let me, at the very outset, say that it is my firm conviction that I have been in 'contact' with Bhagavanji ever since this universe came into being. As a Hindu, I believe that the human soul has to pass through a long cycle of births and deaths. That should explain what I mean by saying that my 'contact' with the Bhagavan is ages-old (comprehending a chain of innumerable lives). I have, therefore, no hesitation in claiming that Bhagavanji has accepted me.

In the year 1988, when I was an eleven-year old adolescent, a small Muslim boy gifted to me the locket of

an old Brahaman (whom I later recognized as Bhagavanji) saying "Take it, it is yours". Coming of a family with a deeply religious background I readily accepted the gift. My paternal grandfather and also my parents contributed significantly to my religious upbringing and I am fortunate now in enjoying the ever-flowing grace of Bhagavanji.

Saints, believed to be liberated souls, are sought after mostly by devotees for worldly ends including recovery from serious diseases and solution of various problems and difficulties. Devotees seeking nothing beyond spirituality are very small in number. I do not claim to be totally free from worldly desires though I have somehow strong spiritual inclinations. Above all, I am drawn to my Bhagavanji by love that is unselfish and spontaneous. I have got an unflinching faith in Him.

What Bhagavanji means to me should best be conveyed by these lines from Benjonson :

The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine,.
But might I of Jove's nectar sup
I would not change for thine.

Benjonson's lines are addressed to the beloved (lady love) in a romantic vein but for me they are spiritually relevant - my soul hungers for the Divine, embodied for me as Tathi Bab, whose image ever haunts my mind, whose grace I prize most. Not even the offer of an earthly kingdom (worldly glory) can distract me from my spiritual goal - an abiding contact with the holy feet of Jagad Guru Bhagavanji. He is all-in-all to me, my beloved Master.

(Sudhir Zutshi)

4. It is I alone who know what Bhagavanji really means to me. Since I am very young, it is well nigh impossible for me to communicate precisely to the audience, including enlightened listeners and devotees advanced in spirituality, what the attributes of God are. However, I have been told by my parents that the Bhagavan belongs to and cares for all; He feeds and protects all the creatures. This is the faith I have attained, thanks to the influence that my parents have exercised upon me.

In order to know God, we must do good and speak sweet and pleasant words. That is how we shall grow morallly and how our intellect will develop. For all this we need a *Guru* or spiritual guide, who will impart to us the required knowledge and skills. Our parents and teachers at school, in fact, are also our Gurus in a sense. But I look upon Bhagavanji as my *Guru* in a much larger sense of the word; I consider Him the indispensable One.

It is because of my good upbringing at home and my regular contact with Bhagavanji's devotees at the Ashram here that I have come to believe that Bhagavan Gopinathji is my *Ishtadev* (chosen Deity) and collectively for all of us he is also a Jagad Guru. His devotees affirm that he has himself declared, " I am *amar* (immortal), the Being untouched by death or destruction; as such I am always within your reach and so you should realize my Presence in and around yourselves." From this we can easily infer that he is always accessible to us - his devotees - as our Sadguru. Hence the desirability of ever remembering his holy name and singing *bhajans* in his praise.

I distinctly remember an experience. It was my birthday. Hitherto I could recognize God through the images of Shri Ram, Shri Krishna and Bhagavan Shankar. That day my parents brought me to Bhagavanji's Ashram here. They showed me the statute of the Bhagawan and various portraits/photographs of Him. My daddy particularly enquired of me how he (Bhagavanji) looked. I promptly remarked "very sweet". It so happned that before my father put his question to me, I had tasted lots of sweets as *prasad* at the Ashram. Since then, the sweetness of Bhagavanji's name has "stayed on" in my mind. I pray that this sweetness fill the hearts of all the *bhaktas* of Bhagavan Gopinathji. I very much wish and earnestly pray that the devotees gathered here cultivate the habit of meditating on the sweet form of our *Sadguru* Maharaj. He will surely sweeten your lives in all respects - both here and hereafter. Through your sustained *sadhana* (constant remembrance of his holy name), success will come to you in all your undertakings.

(Shivani Raina)

[translated from the original piece presented in Hindi]

5. A small girl as I am, it is beyond my ability to convey what I feel about the greatness of Bhagavanji nor can I say how exactly I came to his " Lotus Feet". At the same time, I cannot resist the temptation of saying something relevant as a participant in this function through this short piece. I should acknowledge that it is through my parents - who are Bhagavanji's sincere devotees - that I 'came' to the Bhagavan, not in the literal or physical sense of the word. It is mainly through their upbringing that I grew up as a small devotee of the great saint (although I never saw him in his physical form). Obviously my parent's intense devotion to Bhagavanji must have touched me in my mother's womb itself - not unlike Vir Abhimaneu who had heard his father Arjuna's description of *Chakravyaho* (and how it cold be successfully penetrated) and grasped the implications of the daring feat in question before being born to his mother. When I was just a little child and lisped, I would partake of the *prasad* served to the devotees at the Ashram, whenever I accompanied my parents here. I continue to be drawn to this Ashram like many children, by the 'lure' of Bab Maharaj's sweet *prasad* that is distributed among the devotees at the end of evening *Arti*.

Bhagavanji is a "Living Presence" for his devotees although he left his mortal coil about three decades back. They perceive him as the Lord Almighty, Omnipresent and Ominpotent. As Shri Fotedar's biography mentions it, while Bhagavanji was seen in his physical form, in 1936, at the cremation ground of Rainawari, Srinagar, amidst a crowd of mourners, he was simultaneously present in the room of his residential house he lived in at Rangteng, Srinagar, absorbed in *samadhi*. That shows that even in the human form, he was omnipresent as the Bhagavan.

Whenever I leave for school without having bowed to the photograph of Bhagavanji and without seeking his blessings, I am taken to task by my class teacher, or when I sit for an examination and don't turn inwardly to Bhagavanji for help, I don't perform very well. Having Bhagavanji in my thoughts makes things easy for me and I generally do well in my studies through his grace. He answers my sincere prayers : my mother was once transfered to a distant place but when I prayed to Bhagavanji for her retransfer to her home town, a miracle did somehow happen and she again got the posting of her choice i.e retransfer to Jammu. I have no hesitation in saying about Bhagavanji that I depend on Him wholly and solely. I consider Him master of the three worlds, for the reasons that can be advanced in support of the human - divine.

(Reema Kaul)

6. A man's upbringing as a child and the environment in which he grows up, determine to a large extent the course of his life. When I was a small child, I often watched my parents and grand-mother at home performing *pooja*. Facing the photograph of the great Kashmiri saint, Bhagavanji, whether individually or seated as a group, they would recite the *slokas* of the *Guru Geeta* with faith and utmost devotion. As I grew up, I too followed in their footsteps and turned into a devotee of the Bhagavan. I had observed my father seeking Bhagavanji's blessings before he undertook any work. Once I had to sit for examaination in a paper that I considered very difficult. It occurred to my mind that I should follow my father in seeking spiritual help from Bab Bhagavan before I leave for the examination centre. I prayed earnestly to Him and as I sat for the test, I was overjoyed to read the question paper; I could solve all the questions and thus I scored good marks. This strengthened my resolve to continue praying to Bhagavanji without fail. I also started joining my parents and grand-mother during the daily *pooja* and would meditate on Bhagavanji's form whenever I was free and had no task in hand. By and by, I turned into a firm believer and my devotion to Bhagavanji gained in intensity. And I always did well in my studies.

I would specially lend my ear to the Kashmiri version of one *sloka* of the *Guru Gita* that my grandmother invariably recited from the book rendered into Kashmiri. The English translation of the *sloka* could be phrased thus :

I bow to the feet of the Guru,
By whose grace the impossible becomes possible
For the devotee.

Repeating the *sloka* mentally in Kashmiri became my habit and thus I got established in my devotion to the Bhagavan. I also got interested in reading the various printed materials on Bhagavanji available from the Ashram. I as well began to take part in all the activities including the daily *Arti* and the various programmes organized here on important festive occasions.

I should conclude by saying that Bhagavanji is like the wish-fulfilling tree (*Kalpavraksha*) for me. He grants me what I cherish most and deserve. He is the Bhagavan after my heart.

(Manu Bhat)

[translated from the original piece written in Kashmiri]

7. The day on which I had the first *darshana* of Bhagavanji, at his Habbakadal residence at Srinagar, was the happiest day of my life. Since then He has always been in my thoughts and appears in my meditation now and then. I consider him my Guru as also the Bhagawan adorable. He has shown me the way to Truth.

(Deepa Chrangu)

8. I believe that it is both through divine grace and through our past *karmas* that we come to the Master who uplifts us spiritually. It is to be borne in mind that God does not bestow a thing on a person unless he dserves it. Such a bestowal is also conditioned by time : it cannot take place except at the appropriate time. A particular person does not come to Bhagavanji through a mere chance or accident; only the deserving can hope to come under His spiritual influence. Total surrender and selfless devotion are, however, the means that enable even a worthless person to be the recipient of God's grace. Once a devotee has come to Bhagavanji's fold, he cannot escape his 'hold'. Through my interaction with the other devotees, I have come to realize that our Sadguru's spiritual vibrations 'touch' the devotees in various ways ranging from *darshana* (had in dreams or during meditation) to a 'word' conveyed through a third person or through an advanced devotee of Bhagavanji's choice. As a *Jagad Guru*, he guides devotees from all corners of the world invisibly; the Bhagavan knows no racial boundaries and his influence is global.

I have the highest veneration for Bhagavanji and cherish his 'name' with sincere devotion. My *bhajans* in Kahmiri addressed to Bhagavanji should give the reader/listener an idea of what He means to me. Here is a verse from one such lyric (translation mine) :

My heart longs to worship
The self-effulgent Sun
Of Consciousness - immortal,
That formless Shiva, Shri Gopinath.

(R. K. Sapru)

9. I am just a ten-year old boy; from my infancy itself, I have been brought up in an atmosphere imbued with spirituality . All the elders in our household, including my parents, are devoted to Bhagawanji. As a small child, I very much yearned to visit the sacred abode of the Bhagawan and my wish was granted one day, thanks to my father. He took me alongwith and came to this Ashram. I felt delighted to see Bhagawanji's *Murti*, as if He were welcoming me with a smile. I joined the evening *Arti*, but did not ask for anything from Bab Maharaj. I am now deeply attached to this Ashram and consider all its belongings sacred, even the soil and the pebbles strewn on the ground,. The figure of the Bhagawan, carved in stone, inspires me with universal love. Naturally, I wish well of all, including my fellow students and the elders who care for us. Bhagawanji's divine figure will ever remain enshrined in my heart.

(Anmol Kaul)

10. I cannot describe Bhagawanji's greatness as I know very little about him although I have heard my elders often talking about his spiritual eminence. However, I owe a lot to this Ashram. Through my contact with other children and elderly devotees here, I have imbibed noble thoughts from them and my faith in Bhagavanji has got firmly rooted.

I have also profited from the volumes available in the library of this Ashram, especially from those dealing with Bhagavanji's life and spiritual achievements. I have thus come to know how Bhagavanji helped devotees advance in the spiritual path and also how he helped many in distress or those in dire need out of their difficulties and problems. I consider it my bounden duty to follow the path of righteousness he has shown us. Therein lies our welfare and spiritual salvation.

(Indu Kaul)

11. I am a boy of eight years . For me to speak about Bhagavanji is very difficult and inconceivable : as inconceivable as it is for a mere lamp to match the brilliance of the Sun. When I joined my school, I looked upon my class teacher as the Guru, because it is he who enabled me to speak in Hindi. A couple of years later my parents brought me to Bhagavanji's Ashram here. I did not immediately feel at home here. Rather I felt a bit uneasy and fear-stricken. In this state of mind, I occupied a spot close to Bhagavanji's Murti. I felt composed by and by and the Bhagavan's figure fascinated me.

With the passage of time, after a number of visits to this Ashram, I became religiously inclined. Naturally, out of inquisitivenss, I started making queries from the elders about religion and about the importance of the Guru. I got relevant answers to my questions that could be summed up in a sentence : it is the Guru who ensures the all-round advancement of his pupil. And I realized this fact myself through my consistent devotion to Bhagavanji. Once I met with an accident - had a fall from the roof of my house. However, through Bhagavanji's grace, I did not sustain any injury; in fact, unbelievably, I was able to run and play as usual after the accident. I have full trust in Bhagavanji's divinity and look upon Him as the Boatman who alone can carry us safe across the *bhavasagar* to the abode of permanent joy and peace (no matter whether the boat is assailed by the 'waves' of ignorance before it arrives ashore).

(Sidarth Sapru)

[translated from the original piece presented in Hindi]

12. I came to the holy feet of Bab Maharaj (His Murti) at the Kharyar Ashram at Srinagar in 1985, when I was an Upper K.G student. It did not take me long to become an ardent devotee of Babji; my heart was filled with intense love for him. My father regularly attended the Ashram during the morning hours and he performed evening pooja (devoted to the Bhagawan) at home. This too had a formative influence on me. For me Bhagavanji is the pilot who guides "the alone to the Alone".

(Rema Koul)

13. No aspirant can hope to attain God-realization without the *kripa* of the Guru, an illumined soul accomplished in the spiritual path. Mere *tapas* and detachment are not enough for the *sadhak* to reach his spiritual goal. The Guru's blessings and initiation are indispensable for the seeker's accomplishment.

Bhagavanji was a speical recipient of Mother Sharika's grace and was as such an extraordinary saint. I visited His Ashram at Udaiwala, Jammu alongwith my mother over five years back. I felt drawn to his image installed here; since then I have continued to cherish reverential love for the Bhagavan. In my view, he is the most extraordinary of all Jagad Gurus. He continues to guide and protect his devotees although he attained his *Mahasamadhi* decades back. This is my firm belief - Munificient in answering the devotees' prayers, he is enshrined in my heart and I depend on Him wholly.

(Adesh Mantoo)

14. It was my parents who were instrumental in bringing me to the holy feet of Bhagavanji. As time passed, I turnd into a regular visitor to this Ashram and started attending the evening congregational prayers regularly for my spiritual well-being. I look upon Bhagavanji as my mentor and spiritual guide (though I have not seen Him in his physical form). For me he is an embodiment of infinite love and peace. He is the saint of all times, who renders an invaluable help to whosoever comes to him for the redressal of his personal problems or for his spiritual enlightenment. He laid great emphasis on character-building and on the dispassionate love of mankind.

He is my Guru, who inspires me to perform my duties in a spirit of detachment. At times, he is like my friend who shares my burden of difficulties and sorrows. He is a great source of strength and inspiration to me. He is my Bhagawan, from whom nothing is hidden. It is he who will steer my boat through the "tempestuous sea of life".

(Anu Bhat)

15. Before we got displaced from the valley and migrated to Jammu, I did not have the slightest knowledge

of the great saint Bhagavanji. Displacement from the land of my birth, however painful, has proved a blessing for me inasmuch as my parents have chosen to live in a house at Talab Tilooo that is close to the Ashram. From the very day I saw Bhagavanji's image installed here, I felt very strong; his visage, as I bow to his image, has a tranquillizing effect on my mind. I always remember Bhagavanji; he ever resides in my heart. As I repeat his name mentally, I feel vitalized - strong in body and mind, and can face the odds of life bravely. I may add that it is my firm belief that Bab Maharaj is well aware of the hopes and aspirations of his devotees. We need not, therefore, have any kind of worry. We should remember him earnestly and follow the path of righteousness he has illumined for us. This is the only way in which we can advance spiritually.

(Priya Kaul)

16. I owe it to the Trust that I have learnt about the spiritual eminence of Bhagavanji through the books and journals that have been brought out by it. His fame has spread far and wide, in this country and abroad, especially after he attained His *Mahasamadhi*. Much has been written about his spiritual influence as a Jagad Guru. As a community, we, Kashmiri Pandits, have suffered immensely through our mass-exodus forced on us by circumstances. It is my sincere hope and belief that our redemption from the present crisis as well as our ultimate salvation lies in the hands of Bhagavanji. We should turn inwardly to Him, give up our *ahankar* and learn true humility through prayer and contemplation. Bhagavanji will surely lead us from "darkness to light" and deliver us from our present plight.

(Soni Kachru)

There is only one sin, That is weakness.
When I was a boy, I read Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
The only good man I had any respect for was Satan.
The only saint is that soul that never weakens, faces everything, and determines to die in the game.

-Swami Vivekananda

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Others are getting a life of goblets
and cups
And are getting intoxicated with cup
after cup of wine served to them;
But I derive my intoxication from the
cold-blooded murder of my desires.

- Sant Darshan Singh

Some Mystic Seers of Kashmir and Bhagavanji As I Remember Them

- *Prof. S. L. Pandit*

As is widely known, Kashmir as also the rest of India, has maintained through past centuries a recurring tradition of saints and seers. Some of these were highly learned and of outstanding intellect like *Adi Shankra*. Some were just silent personalities whose vision of the eternal spirit was manifest in their features, in the depths of their physical vision, or in any semi-articulate casual remarks bearing upon the problems of life, both individual and general. One distinctive feature of this tradition of seers or *rishis*, as they are so called in Kahsmir, through long durations of time was that many of them were held in utmost veneration by both Hindus and Muslims whatever their ancestral or personal faith. When I was very young, I had heard that at the village of Jama Nagri, not far from my native station of Kulgam, there was a well-known seer, named Swami Annad Ji, who attracted to his place of residence a large number of devotees round the year from all parts of the valley. I recall that one of his Kulgam-based devotees, himself a *sadhu*, had given me a small photo of Swami Anand Ji. Even in the photo itself one could get a sort of message from the deepest and sparklng eyes of the original, of one who had envisioned a realm of truth and reality beyond the normal perception of ordinary folk. I valued this photo as a precious possession. But, alas, this, along with my books and other records, was lost when my house at Karan Nagar, Srinagar, was torched by militants in late November, 1990.

Next, I have had chances of meeting Swami Nand Lal or Nanda Bab, as he was called by many. He had no permanent abode but would move from place to place, often unannounced, to stay with any of his admirers for a few days. His usual behaviour and talk were far from being normal or easily relevant. But I recall a few memories of his casual remarks which were related to some problems or persons then absorbing my consciousness. Obviously, a positive indication of clairvoyance under the guise of abnormal behaviour.

My contacts with Swami Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji were of a later phase of my experience - after I had retired from active service in 1970. I recall my visits to his residence near Haba Kadal either casually or when there was a crowded occasion because of the celebration of his birthday anniversary or any other sacred occasion. He was impressive in his apearance but, as I recall, he rarelly opened his mouth to utter some feeling or observation.

Further, during those days I got acquainted with Shri Shankar Nath Fotedar of Karan Nagar, Srinagar, who himself, along with his whole family, was an ardent devotee of Bhagawanji. I remember that Shri Fotedar once asked me to translate into English some of Bhagawanji's casual and deep-rooted perceptive remarks. I recall that I did this job for Shri Fotedar though I am not sure what use he made of this exercise. Unfortunately, I did not keep a copy of this rendering with me, for soon after I lost touch with late Shri Fotedar, though I am now told that his whole family, dispersed widely like the rest of us, continue to hold Bhagawanji in great veneration. I am now leading a sort of retired life, not at my age disposed to attend many functions, whether spiritual or secular. But I feel deeply impressed by the large number of seekers, Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris, flocking to the routine or special services at the small-sized temple erected at Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi, to perpetuate Bhagawanji's memory with faith and devotion.

Poetry of the Sacred

THE BLUE PEARL

Advanced in years
I've turned over a new leaf.
I wonder about myself;
Have I gone crazy to feel
That I'm as young as ever ?
Perhaps I'm turned into a seer
With age and experience !

But when wasn't I a seer,
Gifted with the eyes to see?
Yes, I could see
But couldn't *quite* see,
What a pity!
I did see things
But couldn't see them rightly!

My two eyes are turned now
Toward the ever-wakeful eye
At the centre;
What a joy to look at the blue
Of the outer sky,
Matchig the Blue
That ever illumines
The inward eye,
"The Bliss of solitude"
As the poet said.

The light without
Mingles with
The light within,
Then shines forth
As the light Divine;
Call it Black light
Or Dazzling Darkness!

When galaxies come
Into view
Of that inner eye,
The universe is spread
All around;
Trillions of luminous *bindus*,
Amidst shimmering darkness,
Present a spectacle
That delights the heart-lotus;
Then I look for the Blue Pearl
One chances upon
Now and then!

- A. N. Dhar

HERE AND NOW

I prayed :

Not in Vrindavan only,
and at Dakshineswar,
Not in Kashi and Kashmir alone,
beneath an Eastern star —

But in Nebraska too,
in this house — yea nearer
In this very room,
O Lord, do Thou be here !

Not only in the golden past,
and on some bright future day,
Not in a year or two,
or even a month away —

But this week, this day,
my fervent prayer allow;
This very moment, and every moment,
O Lord, be with me now!

And the Lord replied :

Why beg for what you have,
Am I not always near?
Deep within your heart,
You know that I am here.

Could you even think of me
without myself to light your mind?
There is no real you but me.
I can't be lost to find.

It is the restless mind
that makes all time and space.
I shine as consciousness through it,
and keep my silent place.

So do not cry and weep and moan
and beg me to appear —
You could not cry or weep or moan,
were I not already here.

- Susan Walters

Prayer (आऽही)

- Moti Lal Saqi

It is long back that you met me,
What is left behind now are only lonely memories!
This is the rill close to which we met first,
It is here that I am reclining today,
Recalling the past and feeling transported,
Cheering myself up!
Time's cycle cannot be reversed;
If you ever remember me,
Pray of your own for me:
May true affection (that binds men) never wither away!
All has faded, all is lost,
The only legacy in hand are memories;
May you prosper through God's grace!

Tr. A. N. Dhar
(from the original Kashmiri poem
published in नीरय नग़मुँ *)*

❁❁❁❁❁❁❁

Watsun (वचुन)

- Arjan Dev Majboor

Serve a divine drink to Reshivari, O Lati,
Where is your original home, O Madhu Mati ?
The gods hover around you in admiration,
Pray, tell us where your home is !

O Sati, let us shower flowers on you
To adore thee right !
Linger here awhile;
You've gone beyond lakes and seas,
Do tell us where you abide !

Whence did you get these baskets of flowers ?
Tell us why you are in a hurry;
Crowds are following you in sheer frenzy,
Pray, reveal to us your nativity!

Tr. A. N. Dhar
(from the original Kashmiri poem
published in समुँपिक्य पद्य *)*

THE KING

- Susan Walters

Amidst the clamour of so many voices,
Each calling, saying,
Give me,
Please me,
Your are obligated —
Amidst so many voices,
I have learned to listen to One.

One only will I heed —
The one who was with me
before I was born.
Who will be with me as long as I exist —
The voice of the bright One who is my Self.

If there were words,
I would know they were not His.
He speaks by gentle nudgings -
Silently, sweetly, He rules this heart.

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The Teachings of Srimad Bhagavadgita : The Sociological Aspects

- Santwana Dasgupta

[We are grateful to Prof. Dasgupta for this valuable article, based on his research-findings. It highlights an aspect of the Gita that has hitherto not been attended to so rigorously by scholars in general as by the author here.]

ONE IS NATURALLY INTERESTED to know the social setting in which *Srimad Bhagavadgita* flowered as well as the kind of society it envisaged for the future. The social setting of the *Geeta* is, no doubt, rooted in the hoary past. We have therefore to plunge at the outset into the dim past for sometime to determine the nature of the social setting that had evolved at the time of the *Geeta*. For any sociological study of the work evidently this is very important.

According to the current accepted theory of our history books, the Aryans came to India as invaders about 1500 B.C alongwith the *Rig-veda* and the institution of *varnashrama* (i.e caste divisions and four stages of life). Now, this theory of Aryan invasion has been considered suspect since the time it began to be preached in the nineteenth century by some European scholars with the support of the then imperialistic rulers, who were too eager to prove to the world that the Indians, trampled under their feet, could not claim any credit for the high civilization of the Vedic period for that was a contribution of the Aryans coming from Europe. Neither Balgangadhar Tilak, nor Bankim Chander Chattopadhya or Swami Vivekananda, all eminent Indian scholars, could accept this theory for want of definite evidence in the *Vedic* literature or elsewhere.

Recently, the entire theory of Aryan invasion has got exploded as a myth through the extensive researches made by N.S. Rajaram and David Frawley[1] in the field, aided by the recent discoveries in archaeology, astronomy, ancient mathematics and satellite photography. With the bold new interpretation that they have given to the ancient records, we are now in a position to attain much better understanding of the ancient history of India and of the world. Really, it is very unfortunate that although India has preserved the oldest and most extensive records of our ancient civilization, what is found in history books today is a gross misrepresentation of the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*. And the version of history we read in our schools and colleges even after fifty years of our independence reflects only the colonial interests and prejudices rather than facts !

Besides the political reasons, ignorance of science on the part of the nineteenth century European scholars was an additional factor that contributed to the distortion of history. They shared the Christian fundamentalist belief that 4004 B.C was the date of the creation of the world and 2448 B.C. that of the Biblical flood. Since the Aryan invasion could not have preceded the Biblical flood, this date assigned to 1500 B.C has clearly no scientific basis.

The main findings[2] of the scientific researches of Rajaram and Frawley are as follows:-

1. The Rig-Veda and the flowering of the Vedic Age were the product of the unique ecological conditions that resulted from the melting of the ice-caps after the last Ice-Age, and the origins of the speakers of the Indo-European languages from India to Ireland can be traced to India well before 4000 B.C.

2. The Vedic India represents an earlier and more spiritual layer of civilization that existed before the rise of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Indus valley.

3. The home of this primordial civilization was the greater Vedic land from the Indus to the Ganges.

4. The Harrapan civilization belonged to the Sutra period of the Vedic Age.

5. The two civilizations - Vedic and Harrapan - were parts of the same civilization and their end was brought about by the same ecological calamity viz. drying up of the river Saraswati.

6. Since the river Saraswati dried up around 1900 B.C, it sounds absurd that coming after 500 years, the Aryans would describe the river in the Rigveda as a flowing river and a vital source and would settle along its bed after crossing six great rivers - the Indus

and its tributaries. This proves that the theory of Aryan invasion is a pure fiction.

7. The sites of Harrapan civilization from Iran to Northern India are full of *yajnasalas* (places of performing *yajnas* or sacrifices), which were constructed according to the directions in the Vedic texts known as *Sulba-Sutras*. So the theory of Aryan invasion leads us to the absurd conclusion that the constructions of *yajnasalas* were made in the pre-Vedic Age but the instructions for their construction came 500 years *after* with the invading Aryans!

8. The discovery of a metallic relic known as *Vasistha's head* - near Meerut - which after a series of tests in different nuclear physical laboratories in the west revealed that the date of casting it was aroud 3700 B.C, points to the fact that the Aryan invasion around 1500 B.C is not a fact of history. It cannot be that *Vasista's head* was cast in metal in India thousands of years before Vasistha himself or his race came to live in India.

9. Finally, the most important fact, revealed for the purpose of our present study, by the extensive scientific researches of Rajaram and David Frawley, is that the authors of *Sutra-work* in the *Vedas* already treat the Mahabharta war as an ancient event so that it can be said definitely that this war must have taken place before this Harrapan civilization reached its peak. Astronomical findings also point to 3102 B.C as the date of the Mahabharata war. This is also supported by the ancient geneological list given in the *Puranas*.

Now the *Geeta* was delivered at the battle-field of *Mahabharata*, hence its date is also 3102 B.C. Of course the European scholars assign a much later date to the *Geeta*, some put it to the post-Buddha period, some even to the post-Christian period. But the objections to these theories are formidable. For example, the language of the *Geeta* is of the *pre-Panini* period according to the renowned Sanskrit scholar, Dr. Surender Nath Desgupta. Bankim Chandra Chottopadhyay has quoted from Panini in his famous work *Krishna-Charit* (in Bengali) to show that both Arjuna and Krishna were worshipped as the incarnations of *Indra* and *Vishnu* in Panini's time and this means that they belonged to a period of antiquity. It is an accepted view that the gramarrian Panini preceded the Buddha by several centuries. According to Tilak the language of the *Geeta* is the same as that of the Mahabharata and therefore it cannot be a later interpolation.

Besides, the most formidable evidence of the *Geeta* having been delivered at the battlefield of Mahabharata is found in the *Mahabharata* itself. The first chapter of the *Mahabharata*, titled the 'Anukramanika-parbad hyaya' is treated as the index of the original text and therefore whatever is found included in it is acccepted by the scholars as an integral part of the Mahabharata and of the history it records. And, we find that under the heading ' the *Dhritarastra Bilap*' (lamentation of Dhritarastra) in this index it is mentioned that Krishna gave spiritual advice and showed his divine form to Arjuna to dispel the latter's disinclination to fight after he came over to the battlefield.[3]

Thus it is evident that the social background of the *Geeta* is about 5000 years old. According to *Mahabharata* (*Santi-parva*, chapter 188), originally there was only one class in society viz., the Brahmanas. In *Satpath Brahamana* (2/10/11) and *Taitteriya Brahmana* (3/12/9/2) three class-divisions have been mentioned; each division was called a *varna* (literally meaning colour). Actually 'varna' refers to differentiation according to natural inclination (*Guna*) and occupation (*Karma*). These three *varnas* were *Brahamana*, *Khsatra* or *Rajanya* and the free man called the '*Vish*'. The aborigines living in the jungles beyond the pale of the Vedic society were called '*Dasyns*'. According to the scholars this last group came to be included in the Aryan social set up later on and was given the name '*Sudra*'. In *Purushasukta* in the *Rig-Veda*, composed at a much later date, it is stated that "when they divided the primeval being (*Purusha*) the *Brahmana* was his mouth, the *Khshatriya* was his arms, the *Vaisya* was his thighs and from his feet sprang the *Sudras*.". Clearly behind this statement of the 'Purushasukta' there is the organic theory of society, that society is an organism and the different *Varnas* like the different limbs of the whole, are equally important. It does not signify any hierarchy in the social order as yet.

According to the historian R.C. Mazumdar[4] in the hymns of the *Rig-Veda* there is little trace of the rigid restrictions typical of caste in its mature form. There was hardly any taboo on intermarriage, or change of occupation. There are instances of marriages of *Khshatriya* with *Brahmana* and of the union of the Brahamana and Khshatriya with Sudras. For example, in *Mahabharata*, Krishna's wife *Jambavati* came from the aborigines (*chandala* according to a

Jataka). The rigid restrictions with regard to occupations and marriage etc. originated not with the tribes that were called Aryans but with the totemistic proto-Australoid and the Austra-Asiatic inhabitants of the pre-Dravidian India who dreaded the magical effects of the practice of strange crafts and taking of tabooed food. A taboo on intermarriage is also traced to similar sources. The Aryan tribes with their own ideas of colour and hypergamy perpetuated a system that was already in existence.

The divisions were not, however, based on production relations or on purely economic factors as is supposed by those historians[5] who incline to give purely an economic interpretation to our history today. The Varna divisions were based on differences of natural inclinations as stated above. In *Bhagavad Gita* it has been made clear that "of Brahamanas and Khsatriyas and Vaisyas, as also of Sudras, O scorcher of foes, the duties are distributed according to the *gunas* born of their own nature" (XVIII,41). It is also stated in the *Geeta* that control of the mind and the senses, austerity, purity, forbearance and also uprightness, knowledge, realisation, belief in the hereafter - these are the duties of the *Brahamanas*, born of (their own) nature" (XVIII,432). "Prowess, boldness, fortitude, dexterity and also no flying from battle, generosity and sovereignty are the duties of *Khsatriyas* born of (their own) nature." (XVIII,43) and "Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of *Vaisyas* born of (their own) nature, action consisting of service is also the duty of the *Sudras*, born of (their own) nature."(XVIII 44).

In those days a member of each of the three higher castes, who wished to lead an ideal life, had to pass through the rigorous discipline of the Ashramas or the four stages of life. First, he was a *brahamacharin* or Vedic student vow-bound to chastity, then a *grihastha* or married householder, next *vanaprasthi* or forest hermit and finally a *sanyasi*, that is, an ascetic who had renounced the world.

Now, it must be borne in mind that the Indian social institutions have grown through adherence to the Indian view of the meaning and purpose of life. From the earliest times the Indian had his eye turned to the eternity of existence beyond death, rather than to the short-lived joys and sufferings of the world, the interests of which he did not entirely overlook. Actually there is no partition wall in the Indian mind between the secular and the spiritual, the two are harmoniously blended together in his life, i.e. to him, in fact, nothing is secular, every thing is spiritual. To a European the philosophical investigations are merely speculations having no bearing on actual life, while the Indians believed in practising spirituality, and the highest fulfilment of life for them was acquistion of the knowledge of these truths. Thus they were realistis inasmuch as they tried to make the ideal real in life.

The social institutions of *Varna* and *Ahsrama* evolved to give expression to these ideas, to the efforts to make the ideal real in life. And, therefore, we find that the attitude to life is quite different in India when compared to the attitude of the westerners. An individual in India consistent with this attitude lays stress on his Dharma or duties and the European on his righs since he aims to attain a life of enjoyment. And we find that in the *Bhagavad Geeta* this idea of Dharma has found the finest expression. Through performing his assigned Dharma or duties, man gradually reaches the final goal, which is eternal life beyond death. Paul Deussen observes, " The entire history of mankind does not produce much that approaches in grandeur to this thought."[6]

Thus, we see that the socio-religious structure of Vedic India was an indigenous development that suited the ideas of the Indian people and not something imported from outside.

On the economic side, the Vedic people, although mainly a pastoral and agricultural community, were not indifferent to trade and industry. The researches of Rajaram and Frawley show that they knew the seas very well and in the later Vedic days had trade connections with Babylon, Mesopotamia and Egypt.

The centre of the Vedic civilization was "firm middle country" stretching from Saraswai to the Gangetic plain and was under the occupation of the Khrus, Panchals and some other tribes during the Mahabharata age.

The amalgamation of tribes and increase in the size of the kingdom in the later Vedic period inevitably led to the growth of the royal power. The royal claim to absolutism did not pass unchallanged. The Brahamanas enjoying superior position in society due to their spiritual merits offered opposition to this claim and there were conflicts between the kings and the Brahamans of which we find references in the later Vedic literature and in the *Mahabharata*. And there were the popular assemblies also styled as the 'Sabhas' and 'Samitis' which also played an

important role in containing the king's absolute power. All the *varnas* including the Sudras, according to the *Mahabharata* (*Santi-parva*) were represented in the council of ministers.[7]

Outside the regular castes stood important bodies of people, namely, the *Vratyas* and the *Nishads*. The *Vratyas* were Aryans outside the pale of Brahaminism. The *Nishads* were non-Aryan people who lived in their own villages and had their own rulers.

Attempts have been made by the European scholars to describe *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* as mere epics based on fictitious stories and the *Bhagavad Geeta* as a piece of literature in verse without any historical foundation. And the *Varnashram* system according to them was a mere fabrication of the brain of the Brahmanas for exploiting and enslaving the *Sudras*, the labouring class. Historians believing in the doctrine of economic interpretation of history have been propagating such a view.

The name of Dhritarastra Bichitravirya is mentioned in the Kathaka recension of the *Yajurveda*; the name of Krishna, son of Vasudeva and Devaki, is mentioned in the *Chhandyogya Upanishad* and in the latest book of Aranyaka, in which he is identified with Vishnu and Narayana. The name of Arjuna appears in Bajaseniya recension of the Yajurveda and Satpath Brahamana. The ruin of the Kurus is hinted at in the *Chhandyogya Upanishad* and one of the *Srauta Sutras*. Among the principal enemies of the Kurus, the name of the *Srinjayas*, a branch of the *Panchals* also appears in the Vedic literature. The names of Parikshit and his son Janemejaya appear in the *Atharvaveda*.[8]

These references in the Vedic literature constitute enough evidence of the historicity of the *Mahabharata*. The views of the European scholars have been challenged by Rabindra Nath Tagore in his remarkable study of the Indian history titled "Vision of Indian History" and "Bharatbarsher Itihaser Dhara" (in Bengali).[9] According to Rabindranath both the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are accounts of social revolutions of ancient India that took place under the leadership of Sri Ramachandra and Sri Krishna respectively. Sri Ramachandra followed Vishvamitra, leader of the new social force leaving Vasistha, the leader of the traditional group of Brahamans, and united the Aryans and the aborigines. Similarly, Sri Krishna led the social revolution that brewed up during the Mahabharata Age. He opposed the Brahmanas who were making exclusive claims to privileges on the basis of their spiritual superiority and conceded equal rights even to the lowest of the low as borne out by the *Bhagavad Gita* text. In that respect the *Gita* is a gospel of social revolution and has therefore certainly a historical foundation. According to Rabindranath Tagore the *Geeta* is the essence of the *Mahabharata*, the very fulfilment of the Indian history inasmuch as it preaches harmony of all ideas and of all people.

Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on Krishna, delivered in California on April 1, 1900, remarked significantly, "Almost the same circumstances which gave birth to Buddha in India surrounded the rise of Krishna".[10] He pointed out also in his first lecture on the *Geeta* delivered in San Francisco on May 28, 1900 - "To understand the *Geeta* requires its historical background",[11] which only suggests and emphasizes its historicity. It is clear from these statements that Swami Vivekananda also held the view that *Mahabharata* is a historical record of the social revolution of the period of which *Gita* is the gospel.

According to Dr. Kalyan Kumar Ganguly, an eminent historian who is a specialist on ancient India, 'Sodrai' was a tribe living in the border of Afganistan that later on gave a tough opposition to Alexander the Great. They had a great skill in the Arts and Industries. Earlier one branch (or possibly more branches) of this race came to India and settled in the regions of the Aryans and was accepted in the Aryan fold by the Brahamans and came to be called the Sudras. But they were not granted the right to perform *Yajnas*, a ritual alien to them but were allowed to perform their own religious rites. Since they had no right to perform *Yajnas*, a vedic rite, they were given a lower position in the social hierarchy.[12]

Moreover in this period certain tribes were described as '*Papayoni*' (born in crime or inferior in birth). Women also did not enjoy full rights. This was the period when *Dharma* had declined consideralby. Sri Krishna in the *Gita* gave all these people associated with Papayoni, as well as women and the Sudras, equal Rights with the Brahmanas. In the ninth chapter of the *Geeta* he declares to Arjuna "Taking refuge in Me, they also, O son of Pritha - even those who might be of inferior birth, as well as women, *Vaisyas* and *Sudras* will attain the Supreme goal." (XI.32)

Now, there are serious differences of opinion among the great commentators of the *Bhagavad Gita* regarding the exact meaning of the sloka cited above. According to Shankara, all excepting those twice born (*Dwijya*) namely Brahamanas and Khsatriyas are to be treated as of inferior birth. But Madhusudan Saraswati and Sridhar Swami, the other two great commentators, do not accept this view. According to both, the word 'Papayoni' refers only to free criminal tribes and not to women, Vaisyas and Sudras. The *Bhagavata* specifically mentions the name of some of these criminal tribes such as Kirata, Huna, Andhra, Pulinda, Pukkas, Abhir, Summa, Yavana, Khas. And it also declares boldly that even these people born in crimes (Papayoni) will attain the Supreme goal when they take refuge in the Lord (Bhagavata 2/4/18).

Since Dharma had declined in this period people indulged in endless ceremonies that were supported by the Philosophers of the Purva-mimansa school. There was no place for God in these ceremonies. People were prompted by the priests to perform this or that sacrifice and earn this or that merit to have enjoyment either in this world or the other. In all these cermonies animal sacrifices, not excluding even human sacrifices, were the rule. According to the *Mahabharata*, Jarasandha, the powerful king of Magadha, planned to perform a *yajna* sacrificing 108 princely heads and when he had imprisoned 86 princes for the purpose, he was killed by Bhima, the second son of Pandu, under the instructions of Krishna to foil his vile purpose. *Jarasandha* took the side of the Brahamanas and opposed the Khsatriyas, whose side was taken by Krishna.

At the time of *Rajsuya yajna* performed by Yudhisthra, Krishna was given the highest offering as he was considered the greatest of men by Bhisma, the grand old man of the Kuru dynasty, well conversant with Dharma. This enraged Sishupal, a friend of Jarasandha, who in anger tried to arouse the wrath of the assembled kings to make them rise in revolt and create chaos to foil the yajna. He was then killed by Krishna, who was placed incharge of the yajna to ensure its safe performance.

In the *Geeta* Krishna condemns meaningless ceremonies and sacrificies. In chapter II (42,43,44) he asks Arjuna not to be lured by the sweet words of the Vedas promising pleasures in this world; such exuberant Vedic verses are connected with various specific rites as the means of pleasure and power, which do not last long and are the cause of new births. He makes it clear that the "Vedas deal with the three gunas (within the range of Maya)". "Be thou free, O Arjuna, from the triad of the *gunas*, free from the pairs of opposites, ever balanced, free from (the thought of) getting and keeping, and be established in the self. " (II.45)

Here, we find Krishna totally rejecting the *Karmakanda* of the Vedas (ceremonial and sacrificial part) as the Buddha did thousands of years later. But subsequently in the Gita he says, " The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of Yajna, do thou, therefore, O son of Kunti, perform action for *yajna* alone, devoid of attachment." (III.9)

One should notice that he stresses the condition that *yajnas* should be performed not for any material gains, but with non-attachment, as an offering of love to God. Here we find that, in reality, there is no contradiction in Krishna's teaching. Throwing light on this apparent contradiction in his teachings Swami Vivekananda says - "Krishna saw plainly through the vanity of all mummering mockeries and ceremonials of the old priests, and yet he saw some good in them ...... the ceremonial worship of gods and myths is all right .... why ? Because all this worship leads also to the same goal as other kinds of *sadhana* do. Blame no view of religion so far as it is sincere. Various forms of worship do we see in this world. Krishna does not condemn any of them. His heart is all for the masses."[13] There is no logical inconsistency in Krishna's teachings . He says emphatically, "None can go a day out of my path. All have to come to me, whosoever wants to worship in whatsoever form, I give him faith in that form, and through that I meet him." (IV/12)

According to Vivekananda, "whenever any religion succeeds, it must have economic value. Thousands of similar sects will be struggling for power, but only those who meet the real economic problems will have it".[14] He maintains further, " for the religion of the Upanishads to be popularised was a hard task, very little economy was there."[15] The *Geeta* must have met this primary objective of the masses. There is, of course, no clear cut statement in the book in this respect, but in the *Bhagavata* there is a clear statement to the effect that everbody has the right to food to satisfy his hunger and anybody who tries to grab a larger share is a thief and is liable to be punished by society (*Bhagavata* - 7,10,11). Thus it is clear that the social revolution that took

place in Krishna's time also centred round economic problems and his teachings provided for the necessary solution.

It seems that the Varna divisions must have tended at the time of Krishna to be crystallized along hereditary lines. Hence Krishna makes it clear in the *Geeta* that "the four-fold caste was created by me by the differentiation of *guna* and *karma*" (IV.13) He tried to re-establish the system in its pristine form in order to make perfect the growth of humanity. It must be borne in mind that he never sanctioned the caste-system as we find it today, although the supporters of the doctrine of economic interpretation of history at present are blaming him for having upheld the caste distinctions based on heredity.

Now once *varna* is determined by *guna* and *karma*, according to the Gita, it becomes the duty of everybody to follow his natural inclinations and perform his Dharma or duties according to his own Varna. Hence, Krishna did not support Arjuna's disinclination to fight for a right cause, which was the latter's Dharma as a Khsatriya. Krishna makes it clear in the 3rd chapater of the Gita that "Bettter is one's own Dharma (though imperfect), than the Dharma of another well-performed. Better is death in one's own Dharma : The Dharma of another is fraught with fear". (III.35) Swami Swarapananda of the Ramakrishna Mission in his translation of the Gita comments, "The implication is that Arjuna's thought of desisting from fight and going in for calm and peaceful life of the Brahamana is prompted by man's natural desire to shun what is disagreeable and embrace what is agreeable to the senses. He should on no account yield to this weakness."[16] Krishna makes this also clear that "from whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty, a man attains perfection?". (*Geeta*, XVIII. 46).

Swami Vivekananda says, "In Krishna we find two ideas (stand) supreme in his message. The first is the harmony of the different ideas, ... the second is non-attachment ... A man can attain to perfection, the highest goal, sitting on a throne, commanding armies ... shall we all go to the forest caves ? What good would it do ? If the mind is not under control, it is no use living in a cave because the same mind will bring all disturbances there."[17] Krishna's advice is "work day and night" (*Geeta* III.8) but with non-attachment. He makes a significant remark in the *Geeta* : "Behold I am the Lord of the Universe, I have no duty. Every duty is bondage. But I work for work's sake. If I cease to work for a minute, there would be chaos." (Gita III 22-23). Krishna advises further, " Do work for the good of others". He points out, "Verily by action alone Janaka and others attained perfection; simply for the guidance of men should thou perform action." (*Geeta* III. 20) According to Balgangadhar Tilak, "those who have attained perfection are like the eyes of the universe; if they give up work, the universe becomes submerged in darkness. They work for the good of others and for setting examples for others "[18]. Now this is the message of the *Gita* to the common people : work for the good of others day and night. Obviously, this is a very important condition for having a society in which men are happy and prosperous.

To ensure equal treatment to all Krishna enjoins upon us to look upon every one as the manifestation of the divine. And he points out also that the knower of the self looks with an equal eye on a Brahamana endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah (*Geeta* V/18). Now one can argue that Krishna talks of spiritual rights only and not of social rights. But it must be remembered that in India social rights depended on the spiritual rights. Brahmanas enjoyed supremacy since they lived a life of high spirituality; Krishna talks of granting equal rights in the spiritual field. This automatically takes care of social equality.

The struggle for rights between the kings and the Brahamanas on the one hand and the upper classes and the underprivileged masses on the other was very fierce in this period; in consequence religion or Dharma declined. According to Swami Vivekananda " the struggle came to a culminating point in the *Geeta*. When it was causing fear that all India was going to be broken up ... there rose this man Krishna and in the *Geeta* he tries to reconcile between the ceremony and the philosophy of the priests and the people".[19] Although by championing the cause of the people and opposing the sacrificial part of the Vedas, he was the heart of the people, he came to be condemned as a *Vratya* by many down to the Age of Shankaracharya.[20]

This is how Swami Vivekananda sums up his view of Krishna : "He is the most rounded man I know of, wonderfully developed equally in brain and heart and hand. Every moment (of his) is alive with activity, either as a gentleman, warrior, minister, or something else .... This all-rounded and wonderful activity and

combination of brain and heart you see in the Geeta .... exquisite language and nothing can approach it anywhere. Of this tremendous activity of the man, the impression is still there. Five thousand years have passed and he has influenced millions and millions... all the world over. My regard for him is for his perfect sanity. No cobweb in that brain, no superstition .... There is a place for superstition (even) in the *Vedas*. He is the first man before the Buddha, to open the door of religion to every caste. The wonderful mind! That tremendous active life .... Krishna preached in the midst of the battle-field. It means nothing to this man - the flying missiles about him. Calm and sedate he goes on discussing the problems of life and death."[21] This is exactly in terms of Krishna's own teachings : "He who in the midst of intense activity finds himself in the greatest calmness, and in the greatest peace finds intense activity, that is the greatest yogi as well as the wisest man. [*Geeta* IV.18]

Now the social revolution that arose in the west hardly ever bothered about man-making or about the quality of men forming society. However, Eric Frown, a sociologist of the former Soviet Union, expressed the opinion "that a new society is possible only if in the process of developing it new types of human beings also grow."[22] But the Indians knew it from the earliest time that all depends on the right kind of men. In the *Geeta* we find that Krishna lays great emphasis on man-making. In chapter XVI he distinguishes between the *Daivi* or Divine qualities and the *Asuri* or Demonical qualities. The Divine qualities mentioned therein are :" non-injuriousness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquility, absence of calumny, compassion to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride (XVI - 1-2)". The *Asuri* qualities are : "Ostentation, arrogance, self-conceit, anger as also harshness and ignorance (XVI.3)". Obviously, only a society composed of men with divine qualities is an ideal one, in which everybody can enjoy equal rights. Persons with *Asuri* qualities care little for other people's rights; they only seek their own enjoyments at any cost. Kansa, Jarasandha, Duryodhana in the *Mahabharta* oppressed others mercilessly for their own pleasure.

A man must feel for others, Krishna insists. Thus in chapter VI of the Gita he says : " He who judges of pleasure and pain everywhere by the same standard as he applies to himself, that yogi, O Arjuna, is regarded as the highest." (VI.21). That is to say that the best men treat pains and pleasures of others as their own, and they therefore are compassionate to all creatures and find joy in bringing relief to others from their pains and miseries.

Krishna points out clearly also that " He who worships Me, dwelling in all beings, being established in unity, whatever his mode of life, that yogi abides in Me." (VI.31) A person who worships God in all living being serves them lovingly.

Now this love for all humanity, love for all living beings seen as the manifestation of the divine and incessant work for the good of others are the foundation of society as envisaged in the *Gita*. Only in such a society everybody, high and low, can enjoy the same rights. Undoubtedly this is the last word on sociology that has been uttered in that unique book of wisdom and revelation, *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, the jewel in the crown of ancient India.

1.The Politics of History, "*Aryan Invasion Theory and the Subervision of Scholarship*, by N. S. Rajaram *Vedic Aryans and the Origins of Civilizaton* - by David Frawley.
2. N. S. Rajaram - "New Light on Vedic India and Ancient Civilization," *Prabudha Bharata*, September, October, November 1996.
3"*Literal translation of Mahabharata*" by Kalisingh, 1st edition, p-4.
4. R.C. Mazumdar, Roy Chawdhury and Dutta, "*Advanced History of India*", p 31-32.
5. Koshambi is a leading historian of this group.
6. *The Philosophy of Upanishads*, p. 367.
7. 4 Brahamanas, 5 Khastriyas, 21 Vaisyas and 3 Sudras formed the Council.
8. All this information is to be found in the *Advanced History of India* by R.C. Mazumdar and others, p.
9. Vishva Bharati publications.
10. C.W.I ., p. 347.
11. C.W.I., p. 446.
12. See *Bharat Sankriti e Bhagavan Krishna* (In Bengali)
13.C.W.I., p. 439-40.
14. C.W.I., p. 454.
15. C.W.I., p. 455.
16. English Translation : Advaita Ashram 1926, p. 90.
17. C.W.I. pp. 438 to 40.
18. *Sri Geeta* by Jagadish Ch. Ghosh - refers to this view of Tilak in p. 117 from the Bengali version of Tilak's work entitled "*Geeta Rahasye*".
19. C.W.I., p. 455-56.
20. *Advanced History of India*, p.90.
21. C.W.I., pp. 457-58.
22. Article titled "Perestroika - 'The Revolution Social" by B.P.L. Pathak in *Social Scientist* March-April, 1990.

UPANISHADS - A BIRD'S EYE-VIEW

- T. N. Dhar 'Kundan'

"*Janani Twatmaaiva Me Matam*" - A "knowledgeable one is my very soul (B.G. 7.18)", proclaims Shri Krishna in the *Bhagwad Gita*. In order to become knowledgeable one has to acquire knowledge. Vedas are the store-house of knowledge, but then there is a lot of other matter in the *Vedas*; *mantras* relating to actions and deeds, to devotion and worship, to *Yajna* (the sacrifice), and *mantras* relating to knowledge relevant to body, mind and soul, the creator and the creation. It is this knowledge-content of the Vedas which has been culled out and put forth in the form of various Upanishads, sometimes as a narrative, sometimes in question and answer form, and sometimes in the form of a fable or two. There are a lot many Upanishads, some named after the Rishi who has compiled them, like Kathopanishad, some named after the initial word of the first *mantra*, like *Ishavasya Upanishad*, and others named with reference to their distinguishing features, like *Prashnopanishad*. Since these Upanishads are the core of Vedanta and contain the wisdom of ancient India, it is the duty of every one of us who claims to be an Indian, to have at least the basic knowledge of this rich and invaluable heritage of ours. Since their number is large, it should suffice if some of the more important and prominent Upanishads are explained.

An inquisitive mind wants to know the reality of what he sees around him. He wants to unravel the secrets of Nature. He looks to this whole universe with awe, surprise and astonishment, as stated in the Gita (*Aashchariyavat Pashyati Kashchitenam .... B,.G. 2/29*). It is therefore of paramount importance for him to see, hear, think, analyse, discern and experience with utmost concentration in order to know and gain knowledge " *drashtavyah shrotavyo mantavyo nididhyasitavyah atmasakahshatkarahaa kartavyah*". The Upanishads help him, show him the way and guide him. The Gita also says in very clear terms : "*tatvidhi pranipaten pariprashnen sevaya* ... B.G 4/34". One has to approach, enquire and serve in order to gain knowledge.

The vivid- most questions that arise in the mind of a seeker are about the creation as such, the origin of this universe, the nature of life and death, the evolution and the management and administration of the cosmos. For an answer to these questions, for a detailed discussion on these points and for an explanation to this phenomenon, one has to turn to five important Upanishads viz. *Aitreya*, *Brihadaranyaka*, *Shwetashwatar*, *Prashna* and *Chhandogya*.

1. ***Aitreyopanishad*** is the work of Mahidas. He was born of a maid named *Itera*, hence was known as Aitreya and his work also gets his name. This Upanishad has three chapters. The first one deals with the creation of the cosmos and the universe. The second narrates the creation of a human being, transmigration of soul and the liberation. The third deals with the nature of the soul and the Divine. Two statements made in this Upanishad would be noteworthy. It says, "*Atma va idameka evagre aasit nanyatkim chinmishat, sa eekshat lokan nu srijai iti*". Prior to creation only *Parmatma* the supreme soul existed. He saw and desired to create. The Upanishad explains this statement and goes on to add, " *Atma vai jayate santatih*", it is the self, the procreator who is re-born in the form of his progeny.

2. ***Brihadaaranyak***, in size, is voluminous (*Brihad*) and has been narrated in a jungle (*Aranya*) and thus its name. This Upanishad has six chapters and starts with the description of *Ashwamedha Yajna*. It contains some fables and all - important dialogues of *Yagyavalka* with *Janaka*, with *Maitreye* and with *Gargi* and that between *Gargya* and *Ajatshatru*. Through the medium of these interesting conversations the intricate secrets have been explained, the origin of Time and Speech and the life essence (Prana) has been revealed. Three important statements made in this Upanishad are- (i)

Paranchikani vyatrinat swayambhu - the Lord has made the senses extrovert because of which these are drawn towards the sense objects; (ii) *Ekamevaadwitiyam Brahma* - the creator is one and unmatched, without any second; (iii) *aatmaivedam sarvam* - the entire creation is self-incarnate.

3. *Shwetashwatar*. This important work of a Rishi (by the same name) is a very important treatise on the creation of atoms, electrons, protons, and the structure of cells. It also discusses the role of time, nature, destiny and other elements like the positive and negative charges of a magnet. It explains the relationship between the Divine, man and nature. It has beeen stated that "*Maya tu prakritim vidyat/ Mayinam tu Maheshwaram*" - meaning that nature is an illusion created by the Lord who said in the beginning, "*Ekohum bahusyam*"- I am single and let me become multiple."

4. *Prashnopanishad*. As the name itself suggests, this Upanishad is based on the answers given to six questions put by Sukesh, Satyakam, Gargya, Kaushalya, Vaidarbhi and Kabandhi. Acharya Pippalad takes up the last question first and from the answer to that question derives answers to the remaining five. The last question is - "how did the creation take place?" The answer given is that it took place because of the combination of matter and force, positive and negative, active and passive called *Prana* and *Rayi*, symbolised in male and female. The importance of the life essence *Prana* has been established in this Upanishad and life after death also described.

5. *Chhandogya*. This is one of the voluminous Upanishads divided into eight sections with 154 sub-sections. This is said to have been compiled by *Angirus* and starts with a detailed account of the worship of 'OM'. There are quite a few illustrative fables in this Upanishad relating to *Jana Shruti - Raikva Rishi, Jabala - Satyakam, Shwetaketu-Jaibali, Ashwapati-Uddalak Rishi* and *Sanat Kumar - Narada*. A very important scientific fact has been establishd in this Upanishad, that the physical elements like water, light, etc. are necessary to sustain the mental and psychological elements like mind, speech, resolution, attention, etc. The Upanishad dwells upon the gradual development of spirituality. It says, "*Chatushkalah padah Brahmanah prakashawan nama*". The supreme shines on all sides and "*Bhuma eva parmam sukham*" i.e the search for the eternal and endless only is supreme bliss.

All the Upanishads have proclaimed and established the omnipresence of God. Yet *Ishavasyopanishad* and *Mandukyopanishad* have special significance in regard to this subject. *Shwetashwatar*opanishad says '*Eko devah sarvabhuteshu gudah sarva vyapi sarvabhutantratma*' - there is one supreme pervading everything as its soul.

6. *Ishavasyopanishad*. This Upanishad has a distinct place inasmuch as it forms the last fortieth chapter of Shukalayajurveda. It begins with the words '*Ishawasyam*' and thus gets its name. After stating the established truth about the omnipresence of the Divine it says '*Tyekhtena bhunjithah*' - enjoy, but with an attitude of sacrificing and not that of attachment. It further enjoins, '*Ma gridhah Kasyachit dhanam*' - covet not others' wealth. The life span in ancient times was a hundred years and above. Referring to that, the Upanishad says '*Kurvannevaha Karmani jijivishet shatam samah*' - desire to live a hundred years but utilise this span of life in doing good deeds.

7. *Mandukya*. This Upanishad was compiled by *Rishi Mandukya* from whom it gets its name. Running into only twelve mantras, it explains the all-pervading Brahman in the form of 'OM'. It analyses its four components, a, o, m and the silent 'n' and connects them to the four states of the Supreme and the human being viz. wakefulness, sleeping state, dreaming state, and the fourth one beyond these three. It also gives an account of the five constituents of a human being i.e body-structure made of food (*anna*), the ability to perform rooted in the life essence (*prana*), the aspect of desire in the human mind (*mana*), knowledge and ego of the intellect (*vijnyan*) and the ability to derive pleasure(*ananda*) from both desire and action. This Upanishad has in effect said that the Divine is all-pervading in the form of 'OM' and can be known either as 'He' or as 'I'. In the former case one becomes a devotee (*Bhakta*) and in the latter a knowledgeable soul (*jnani*).

Kena, *Katha* and *Mundaka* are the three Upanishads in which again vital questions about the secrets of this universe, knowledge and liberation have been answered and explained in detail. Let us start with the *Mundakopanishad*.

8. ***Mundaka***. It has an interesting beginning. Shaunaka Rishi approaches Acharya Angria, the perceiver of this Upanishad and asks "Pray ! teach me some such subject by knowing which all the branches of Knowledge become known". In reply the Acharya says that knowledge is of two types, *Para* (hidden) and *Apara* (apparent). It is the former which leads to liberation and self-realisation. A quotable saying of this Upanishad is "*Sa vidya ya vimuktaye*" education is that which has liberation as its aim. It is interesting to note that each Upanishad has something or the other to it which has become axiomatic. *Ishavasya* has brought out the meaning of '*Vidya*' and '*Avidya*': experienced knowledge and acquired knowledge. *Prashnopanishad* has established the two elements, *Prana* and *Rayi*, the active and the passive, as necessary for creation. Mundak describes two types of education, *Para*, the hidden and superior one and *Apara*, the mundane. Similarly *Kenopanishad* has mentioned the two driving forces as *Jivatma*, the individual soul and *Parmatma*, the collective supreme soul. *Kathopanishad* has referred to two important factors, *Shreya*, the beneficial and *Preya*, the attractive.

9. ***Kenopanishad*** gets its name from the first word of the question raised in the beginnig itself. *Kena*, by whom ? The full question is '*Keneshitam patati preshitam manah*?' - by whom is the mind diverted towards the sense objects? In other words, who is the driving force behind all activities, physical, mental, etc. There is a detailed discussion on the subject in this Upanishad that establishes the existence of the supreme power that pervades, guides and controls the entire universe. There is a tale relating to *Vritrasur* through the use of which the main theme has been explained. The divine power has been described as unimaginable, indescribable, yet existing in the form of *Jivatma*, the individual soul and Parmatma, the collective supreme soul.

10. ***Kathopanishad***. This Upanishad perceived by Rishi *Katha* is famous because of the dialogue between *Nachiketa* and *Yama*. Because of the insistence of *Nachiketa*, the Yama is forced to divulge the secrets of self-realisation for which he says one has to peep inside one's self with due discipline and yogic practices. Let us take up yet another important Upanishad viz. *Taittirya* before concluding this article.

11. ***Taittirya***. This Upanishad, in three parts, is unique inasmuch as it throws light on the ancient educational system. The first part is called Shikshadhyay Balli., or the chapter on education. The second part is Brahmanand Balli, or the chapater on supreme bliss, and the third part is Bhrigu Balli, the chapter explaining the worship of the Supreme. This Upanishad is a treatise on the learning process, pronunciation, recitation, phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, etymology etc. It throws light upon the duties of the teacher and the taught, the essence of education, self-study, study of the scriptures and the development of the spirit of a student. There is also an account of *Gurukula*, campus of the preceptor and the *Deekshanta*, the present-day convocation, after which a *Brahmachari*, i.e. a celibate used to start *Grihasta*, the family life.

The study of all these Upanishads is fascinating, illuminating, informative and educative. Let us conclude this note on the Upanishads with an Upanishadic quotation:"*Swadhyaya Pravachanabhyam na pramaditavyam*" - one should shirk neither learning nor teaching.

"There is a divinity that shapeth our ends."
(Shakespeare)

"There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow."
(Shakespeare)

HOLY SHRINE OF SHARDA

- S. N. Zadoo ' Suman '

KASHYAP RISHI's abode situated in the northern part of India is famous for many sacred places. Sharda, now in Pak-occupied Kashmir (POK), is one among them. It is one of the oldest places of pilgrimage located in the west of Kashmir near Keran at a hillock across Krishan Ganga river. On the bank of *Madhumati*, which joins the Krishen Ganga, lies the temple of Sharda (Stein). It commands a panoramic view. There is a spring covered with tiles and water gushes out from one of its sides. The shrine is hexa-angular in shape due to the fact that the deity has sixfold eternal qualities viz. omniscience, completeness, consciousness, freedom, omnipotence and boundlessness. It bestows mercy on the votaries. An image of *Saraswati* engraved on a black stone lies in front of the spring. There are spacious halls, housing the library containing valuable books. Below the spring lies a strip of land which emits gas at different places which is used for cooking purposes. It originates from the earth in the natural manner and has a mysterious and secret origin. Nobody has so far been able to challenge its authenticity. It is said that the gas is volcanic in origin.

The word 'Sharda' literally means the goddess of learning/speech/eloquence. While entering the second stage of life, a *dwija* (twice-born) is to be imparted a lesson in the Vedas in the Sharda script after his investiture with the sacred thread.

The *Sharda* script is an independent script that was invented by the Kashmiri Pandits.. It is one of the branches derived from *Brahmi* and the same has originated from this place. The Sharda Alphabets are given inscribed on a slate outside the shrine. It will be seen that most of the alphabets in Devnagri are the same as in Sharda with a little modification which is manifest from the recension of a language. It, in a way, resembles the Devnagri Script and was in use since Ashoka's time (263 B.C) to King Laltaditya's time as Buddhism declined later on. This script was used by the Kashmiris in olden times. *Sharda* and *Devnagri* scripts are known to scholars but in the case of *prakrit*, literally in what language common people expressed themselves in olden times, there is no independent script available at all. The oldest book written in Sharda is *Kallap* or a Digest of Sanskrit Grammar giving a complete description of the eight parts of speech (*Ashta Diayi*) on the pattern of Panini's Grammar (400 B.C)

This seat of learning was also famous as a university conferring degrees/certificates of honour to candidates in the scriptures. A day in a year was celebrated as convocation, which was distinctly known as *Gouri Tritiya* falling in January. This tradition continues till today. On account of the Muslim rule in Kashmir this famous institution was closed for studies and since 1947 it has fallen in POK. It is said that this scared place was guarded by the Maharaja's army till 1947 in order to ensure that its sanctity is maintained, but as ill-luck would have it the precious books, manuscripts and literature lying in the library were destroyed by the Pak army soon after the partition. It is recorded by the great historian *Kalhan Pandit* of Kashmir in the *Rajtarangini* (13th century A.D) that there used to be a University for imparting lessons in Sanskrit literature besides the Vedic source of knowledge. Dr. Max Muller remarks about the Sharda Peeth that "It was a renowned institution in India. People from far and near joined the classes in six systems of Indian philosophy." There is mentioned an event of 13th century A.D. when *Ramanuja*, a philosopher of Vedanta, had paid a visit to this shrine from Kerala. He succeeded in taking away a manuscript from the library attached to the shrine but due to the strict vigil of these he was caught near Kohala Bridge and the manuscript was recovered from him. Ramanuja, believed to be the incarnation of *Sesh* or *Ajanta*, rescued Dharma by disseminating the ancient Doctrine of qualified monism or *Visheshtadvaite Vada*.

Later on when the the court-language became Persianized Urdu, the people of Kashmir were dismayed. They showed little interest in this script. Historically among many *Shakti peethas* in India viz. Kashi, Kanoj, Shringhari, Avantika etc, *Sharda* is also accepted as one which in lexical meaning is a

place or seat of learning or origin of speech. There used to be separate wings for yogic practices, meditation, penance and for study of philosophy at this peeth. It follows therefore that this script was used and developed by scholars and philosophers of Kashmir from King Lalitaditya's time (8th century A.D). Most of the saints/seers used to settle at Sharda in hermitages constructed by the Managing Committee of the shrine. The scenery of this place is also very attractive: delightfully so because of the presence of trees and plants and the flow of Krishen Ganga river underneath. Till 1947 one of the famous saints of Kashmir Swami Aftab Ji Bhasker (expired in 1960) who hailed from Karshama (Kupwara district) had his hermitage at the feet of the shrine for many years. He was distinctly known for his ritualistic practices, penance and devotion to the deity. In a state of ecstasy he would compose poems in Kashmiri, which are very popular nowadays for their sweetness and subtle meaning. During Pakistani infiltration in 1947 he was set free by the army, believed to have become possible through his miraculous powers.

As a matter of fact the latest school of Hindu philosophy called Kashmir Shaivism of the 9th century, considered the science of humanism/ compassion has been basically developed/originated in the *Sharda* script. The Shaivite philosophy has three divisions namely *Agama* (revelation), *Spanda* (pulsation) and *Pratibijna* (recognition) referring to Man, Universe and the Controller. The Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir has been able to transcribe relevant manuscripts into Sanskrit and has taken pains to get this unique philosophy published. About 87 books have so far been published and made available to scholars for study. (The author had the privilege of being awarded a free/complete set of books on Kashmir Shaivism by the State Govt. in 1966 in recognition of his scholarship)

Besides Hindus, Panatheistic Muslim mystics used to visit this sacred place for exchange of thoughts on different subjects. They appreciated the path of constant awareness as propounded by the *Shaivitics* of Kashmir. Even now astrologers of Kashmir cast/develop horoscopes in the Sharda script but due to people's general unfamiliarity with the script these horoscopes were transliterated into Devnagri script later on.

Swami Nand Lal Kaul (died 1968), saint of a high order and an inspired disciple of Swami Lalji, known for his gentle and quiet ways of life, was very much impressed by the extra-ordinary benevolence of the deity and he used to stay at *Sharda* for austerity and penance and meditation. This sacred and secret place is permanent and immutable and its depths are unshaken. The river Krishen Ganaga that flows there has an abiding value for the ardent lovers of nature. After all, our culture has descended from the *rishis* who are our guides/masters. In fact the Hindus in general are governed by their respective *Gotras* that determine their lineage. The aspirants used to flock to Sharda for study and they would get free board and lodge, besides free instruction. A *Jagir* was also granted to the shrine by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1824 for accommodating students/scholars. The cattle, particularly cows, were found grazing on abundant grass in a free and dignified manner. There was no hunger or starvation for the well-disposed devotees/lovers of nature and for those who propitiated the deity. Men of courage and determination attained all-round success there, so to say they were in ineffable delight. This was an ideal place for saint-philosophers who could improve upon their mystic practices (occultism) that culminate in the aspirant's unfettered affirmation of the truth of spiritual life.

Jai Shankar Prasad in his Treatise on metaphysics (Magnum opus) i.e. his account of the journey through time and space/psycho-analysis thereof, has described his aesthetic perception of spiritual truths in the following words :-

यज्ञ कर्मो से जीवन के सपनों का स्वर्ग मिलेगा ।
इसी विपिन में मानस की आशा का कुसुम खिलेगा ।।

"It (spiritual fulfilment) can be achieved by virtue of actions based on sacrifice in the same forest and the flowers of our hopes shall bloom".

It is after all in silence and seclusion that one can attain peace. Lord Krishna delivering lessons to Arjun, has laid great stress upon serenity as a spiritual virtue comprehending "peace of mind, love, grace or mercy, " शान्ति निर्वाण परमाम , which can be attained through Guru Kripa (master's grace), as described by Guru Nanak Dev Ji in Granth Sahib:

गुरु किरपा जेहि नर कीति, तिंह इह जुगती पहचानी

In spiritualism one has to commit oneself to His will at any cost, which is rooted in the illimitable and inimitable nature/character of His mercy.

The Rig Veda says about this shrine :-

इड़ा सरस्वती मही तिस्रो देवीर्मयो भुवः

(Rig Ved 5/5/8)

"All the three pervade the universe - Idha, Saraswati and Mahi."

Sharda is on the same pattern hidden to human eyes as *Maha Kali* spring is under the roof of a mosque in Srinagar (Kashmir). In *Durga Sapt Shati* the shrine has been described as under :-

> Sharda is higher knowledge, exalted speech, Bharti, Organ of expression, goddess of wisdom, bestower of desires, essence of Vedas and controller of intellect. The goddess grants the wishes of her devotee on account of being most benign and bountiful.

Sh. P. N. Ganhar has thus described the *Sharda* deity- "The goddess is a personification of all-pervading power of the Lord." The places like *Sharda, Chitraakute, Koti-tirtha*, etc. provide proof of the ties which bound Kashmir with other parts of India - Nilmat Puran. As the *Shastras* affirm, the true spirit of worship is the sacrifice. Goddess *Sharda* favours the aspirant with the five-fold stages of knowledge relating to generation, increase, activity, change and destruction till the soul attains psychic energy पराशक्ति which pervades the earth, heaven and the inter-space. The most illustrious of the scholars of Orientalism from the west, Prof. Max Muller, has in his 'Six Systems of Indian Philosophy' stressed upon the sanctity and serenity of the Shrine. Tagore has exclaimed "Your dance of limitless power, let it fill my mind." This identity has been establishd by the logical method of *Jalpa* (argument) and *Vada* (reasoning) - Upanishad. Our philosophers have particularly revealed their genius in a surpassing degree by means of their skill, dialectics and eloquence upholding the universal view that non-duality is the conclusion of all the systems of philosophy which can be inculcated through the process of reasoning and discrimination.

.... Meditating on the Guru's physical form means meditating on the Infinite Shiva, repeating the Guru's name means repeating (the name of) the Infinite Shiva. (that is, the Guru and the Infinite Shiva are one)

I bow to the Guru, who is (indeed) the Eternal Brahman, the abode of peace, unconfined (even) by space, free from all ignorance and beyond (even) yogic practices.

... I bow to the Guru, Who pervades the whole Universe, comprising all that is motionless, able to move and free from taint and peaceful e.g. saints and sages).

By constantly meditating on the Guru, one becomes indistinguishable from Brahman; one certainly loses attachment to one's body, rank and looks.

– *Shlokas from Guru Gita*

Those who do not follow the Yoga of love, knowledge, or work, as taught by Me, but pursue instead the path of the worldly and seek to gratify their selfish desires through their restless senses – verily do they tread the round of birth and death.

- *Sri Krishna to Uddhava (Bhagavatam)*

GAYATRI UPASANA

- O. N. Bhat 'Kuthari'

THE *Gayatri Mantra* is the sacrifice which all the Hindus have been offering daily to the Almighty for over 3000 years. No spiritual progress is possible until a *sadhaka* (aspirant) unfolds his higher spiritual faculty which is called *Budhi* (intellect). He has to strive to find within himself all the sufficiently needed guidance for his spiritual advancement. The importance and significance of the development of *Budhi* cannot be ignored by a devout aspirant. So, the great saints made the *japa* of *Gayatri Mantra* an integral part of the daily religious practice of the Hindus. The *Gayatri Mantra* which is the chief element in Gayatri Upasana is the essence of the *Vedas*. The *japa* of *Gayatri Mantra* is equivalent to the recitation of the four *Vedas*. It destroys all sins. The Gayatri Mantra is the most essential and sacred prayer in the world. We ask only for a righteous intellect so that we can progress on the spiritual path. Intellect is the power to descriminate between right and wrong. If our intellect becomes divinely purified and inspired we realise the perennial glory of Supreme unity, the state in which there is no trans-migration of soul. The Mantra is capable of unfolding our spiritual faculty in a remarkable manner provided it is used properly.

The worship of *Gayatri Devi* enables the devotee to unite his consciousness with that of Isvara (God) to know Him. Gayatri Mantra helps to unfold human consciousness progressively. With *Gayatri Upasana*, Her Power can be invoked and utilized for the unfoldment of human consciousness for attaining the ultimate goal of human effort, i.e. self-realisation. The word Upasana means literally "sitting near". The aspirant who wants direct contact with his *Ishta Devata* (chosen deity) gradually develops the habit of sitting near Him. *Gayatri Upasana* involves *Mantra Yoga*. Mantra Yoga is essentially the technique of spiritual unfoldment through the practice of *Japa*.

Mantra is a particular combination of some letters of the Sanskrit language arranged in a certain way to bring about a specific result. The main aim of *mantra* is to purify and harmonize the vehicles of the *sadhaka* so that he becomes increasingly sensitive to spiritual consciousness. The *Gayatri Upasana* means for the most part, the *japa* of Gayatri Mantra. *Japa* means physical or mental repetition of Mantra which produces vibrations on different planes and these vibrations affect the vehicles or (*kosas*) of the *sadhaka* to make it possible for him to reach the deeper layers of his consciousness.

Japa of the *Gayatri Mantra* can be performed loudly, silently or mentally. The silent *japa* of a *mantra* is more effective than the loud. But the mental repetition is *japa* in the real sense. Mental *japa* has many stages. It begins with the repetition of the mantra mentally, mind being conscious of the sounds produced. In the second stage the meaning of every word is evoked with the sound. In the third stage, the whole idea underlying the *mantra* is clearly formulated. In the final stage, the reality, which is the objective of the *mantra*, dawns upon the *sadhaka's* consciousness and this is called *Mantra Sidhi*. In the higher stages of Japa Yoga the *sadhaka* passes into a kind of Samadhi. The most important point for the beginner is to remember that the *japa* is not a mere mechanical repetition of a formula or name. The success of the *japa* is possible when all the powers and faculties are concentrated and directed towards the objective. The important point is to make a beginning and to continue in the direction of the goal with all the earnestness without allowing the process to degenerate into a routine.

By constant chanting of this *Mantra* we purify ourselves as chanting has a universal power, demanding neither wealth nor hard effort. Every one should try to understand the real meaning and significance of this Holy *Mantra*. This is *Manata* and prayer combined.

The *Gayatri Mantra* is also known as *Savitri Mantra* and *Guru Mantra* as this Manatra is the first sermon given to a disciple at the time of *Vedaramb* by the Guru. On the occasion of sacred thread ceremony, the Guru amidst chanting of Vedic mantras in presence of Holy sacrificial fire puts the sacred thread called *Gayatri* or *Yagnopavit* round the neck of a Brahmin boy and initiates him by silently chanting the *Gayatri Mantra* in his ear. Hence, the *Mantra* is called *Guru Mantra*. In the Rig Veda (Book III Hymn 62 verse 10), it is mentioned as *Gayatri Mantra*. The word *Gayatri* is defined as *Gayantam Trayate iti Gayatri* (that which saves the chanter).

Gayatri Mantra protects the sinner from the onslaughts of worldly sufferings and pains. One of the invocation *Mantras* of Gayatri is *AUM AYAHI VARDE DEVI JAPE ME SAMNIDHAUBHAVA GAYANTAM TRAYASE YASHAD GAYATRI TVAM*

TATAH SUMRETA. "Aum, come, boon-giving Goddess and be present at my prayer since thou savest by being sung, therefore Thou are called *Gayatri*. The complete *Mantra* is "*Aum Bhur Bhuvah Swah Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonah Prachodeyat*". The purpot of this holy Mantra is as under :-

We meditate upon the supreme glorious divine, radiance of the supreme Being which sustains and protects the whole universe. Let him illuminate our intellect to lead us on the right path to reach the goal of self-realization. The *Mantra* is clearly divisible into three well-defined parts. The purpose of the first part, *Aum Bhur Bhavaswaha*, is to arouse in the Sadhaka's vehicles certain powers which are latent in every human being, to prepare the ground for effective sadhana. The second part consists of *Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi* - it is meant to stimulate the sadhaka's intense inspiration to come in contact with the divine consciousness. The third part consists of *Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodaytat*, and is meant to bring about an attitude of self-surrender which is essential for divine grace. The self-surrender helps in removing the obstacles caused by egoism and makes way for the spiritual forces to flow into our mind. In *Japa*, the Sadhaka has to concentrate his mind on the light of divine consciousness hidden within his heart.

In *Japa* and meditation of *Gayatri*, the *sadhaka* invokes *Gayatri Devi* for the Divine Light which is derived from the *Savita*. The mind should be in a fit condition to receive this light. Hence there is need to purify the body and mind before starting *japa*. Certain ceremonies are obligatory which aim at the purification or *Shudhi* of the aspirant's vehicles of consciousness.

After taking early bath, the aspirant must sit on a comfortable *Asana* (seat) facing the east. First he should perform certain prescribed purificatory ceremonies. The object of these is to stop at least for the period of worship, all disturbing and distracting thoughts. After the invocatory *Mantras* have been recited and the mental image of the chosen Deity formed, the next step is to meditate on that Deity for the unfoldment of our *Budhi* (intellect). The *japa* of *Gayatri Mantra* can be performed with the help of a rosary containing 108 beads. *Gayatri Upasana* is to be performed three times a day - morning, noon and evening. The *sadhana* as per prescribed rules is highly useful and essential. Putting on *Yagynopavit/Gayatri* (sacred thread) after the youth concerned is duly initiated by the *Guru*, who pours *Guru Mantra* into his ears and puts the sacred thread round his neck in presence of sacrificial fire amidst chanting of the *Vedic mantras*, proves vitally useful (in fact indispensable) for achieving the goal. It is obligatory for every Hindu youth to procure the *Yagnopavit* at an early age as prescribed in our *Shastras* (religious rule). The sacred thread-ceremony can be performed in a simple, sacred and auspicious way without spending heavy amounts on pomp and show.

Holding of the sacred thread-ceremony of a group of young ones jointly is the social need of the hour. It can serve the real purpose of the ceremony without involving wasteful expendiure. Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra of Bohri, Jammu has taken the lead in organising the mass *Yagnopavit* ceremony of Hindu youths. Such social enterprises must receive due appreciation and encouragement from society.

The holy *Navratras* (1st nine days of the bright fortnight of Chaitra and Ashwni) are highly advantageous and sacred for the basic *Gayatri Anushthan*. Recitation of the *Gayatri Mantra* twenty four thousand times is prescribed. This can be performed by observing a nine-day fast with *Japa* on 27 Malas of rosary daily after observing all the prescribed formalities. This will take three/four hours daily and can be completed easily in the morning and evening. On the last day a *Yagya* with 108 offerings into the sacrificial fire is to be performed. Such type of *Gayatri Upasana* is highly desirable and profitable for strengthening self-confidence and faith. Our success depends upon our *Sradha* (faith). When we pray for enlightenment or for the direct awareness of reality within us, the enlightenment may not come immediately, but conditions certainly become favourable. God does not respond immediately to our prayer by presenting Himself before us. This is not possible. A favourable atmosphere is, however, created to make us worthy and qualified to receive Him in the future. We should have faith and make continuous efforts. It is only when the *sadhaka* overcomes all kinds of difficulties and develops an indomitable Will, that his steady progress becomes possible.

A competent *Guru* (teacher) only can help and guide the *Sadhaka*. He gives general directions and guidance, but mostly the *Sadhaka* has to depend upon Himself. He has to make a start and adopt earnestly a simple, pure and sacred life of *sadhana*. The *Sadhaka* has to put in maximum effort, aspire ardently and wait patiently for the light. When his mind becomes suficiently purified, the light will appear within to shed its radiance.

The *Gayatri Upasana* is essentially helpful in making this Light to appear within the *sadhak's* inner self to shine with brilliance to make visible the Eternal Truth with its clear significance, essence and utility.

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Saadhana And God-Realization

- Kanhaya Lal Moza

THERE ARE FIVE TYPES OF *SAADHANAS* which *saadhaks*, all over the world, practise for the realization of God. These are : *shanta, sakhya, dasya, vatsalya* and *madhurya*. A *saadhana* is a specific psycho-physical discipline observed for the realization of some specific objective and a practitioner of this discipline is called a *saadhak*. For the realization of God a *saadhak* observes one or more of the above mentioned disciplines.

Shanta consists in an assiduous maintenance of equanimity under the temporal flux. This discipline was practised in the west - alluding to only a few - by Phythagoras, Socrates, Jesus Christ, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Anselm, William Wordsworth, Bishop George Berkley, St. David, Hume and Rene Descartes. In India, excluding Kashmir, this discipline was practised - again alluding to only a few - by Vardhman Mahavira, Gautama the Buddha, Shankarcharya, Sant Kabir, Narsi Mehta, Shri Raman Maharishi, Sant Tukaram, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Guru Nanak Dev, Ramakrishna Parmahamsa, Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba. The most outstanding practitioners of this type of *saadhana* in Kashmir, among others, are : Laleshwari, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, Mirza Kak, Bhagavan Gopinathji and Swami Laxman Ji Maharaj. The practitioners of this type of discipline constantly meditate upon God unruffled by adverse circumstances. This *saadhana* leads to transcendental experiences in which a practitioner, losing completely physical consciousness, becomes a living soul. This *saadhana*, besides some other types, was practised also by Mohammed, the prophet of Islam. The Gita too extols *yoga* of equanimity as a path towards the realization of self and God. The personality of a shanta *saadhak* exudes infectious soothing peace and clam. I had always watched with ecstatic wonder the shanta serenity of my senior colleague and friend Pt. Janki Nath Kamal. Shri Kamal had built his inner life upon the adamantine foundation of spiritual granite.

Sakhya is that type of *saadhana* in which a seeker after God treats Him perfectly and solely as a friend and benefactor. It was practised by Sudhama, Subal and Shridham for whom Lord Krishna was only a friend. Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, also sought to realize Rama through the practise of this *saadhana*. The cow-boys of Vrindhavan, the constant companions of Lord Krishna, illustrate realization of God through this *saadhana*. Balram, the brother of Lord Krishna, was an unflinching practitioner of the same discipline. Shri Ramakrishna Parmahamsa practised this *saadhana* with unswerving steadfastness. Among Kashmiri Sufi poets, besides the other types, this *saadhana* is very often conspicuous.

In *dasya* type of *saadhana* the aspirant considers himself the slave of God and seeks to realize Him through servile self-abnegation. In Islam there is great emphasis upon this type of *saadhana*. Here the votary is generally either the slave of God or the slave of Mohammed. The common prefix 'Abdul' of Muslim names is a synthesis of two Arabic words '*Abus*' and '*Al*', '*Abus*' means slave and 'Al' stands for 'of the'. Thus, Abdul Rahim, Abdual Rashid, Abdul Razak etc. are all slaves of different manifestational attributes of God. Islam is a dualist religion with impersonal concept of God. Here man and God are two distinct and separate entities. God is fomless and an aspirant can realize Him through *dasya saadhana*. But complete dissolution of the individual soul into God is considered an utter impossibility. Islam advocates freedom of human will and emphasizes *dasya* for the realization of God. Islam implies humility; Islam is peace and it is refuge in God. We have examples of several domestic hands in Kashmir who serving faithfully their masters and God attained very high levels of spiritual realization. One such illustrious example is *Misha Sahib* who is reverentially called *Misha Padshah* in Kashmir. In the *Ramayana*, *Hanuman* practises *dasya* for the realization of Rama. After returning from the forest with Shri Rama's wooden sandals, Bharata practised this *saadhana* for fourteen years.

In the *vatsalya* type of *saadhana*, a seeker treats God as a child and showers love and affection upon Him in abundance. This type of *saadhana* greatly appealed to Sur Das who enjoys depicting the pranks and antics of the infant Krishna. Tulsi Das too passses through this type of *saadhana* while depicting the infancy and childhood of Shri Rama. A Christian worshipping Jesus as an infant also is a practitioner of this type of discipline. King Dashratha, Kaushalya and Yashoda are *saadhaks* of this type. In the spiritual progress of Shri Ramakrishna Parmahamsa, there came a stage when the great *saadhak* experienced

Ramlala all around him. Prakash Ram Bhatt, the saintly narrator of Rama's story in Kashmiri verse, devoutly cherishes *vatsalyaa bhava*. This early nineteenth century poet from southern Kashmir touches sublime heights while depicting the paths concomitant to Rama's exile. A teacher who showers his unselfish love upon his educands is also a practitioner of this type of *saadhana*. He also experiencs spiritual beatitude in abundance.

Many *saadhaks* seek God as a lover. This type of saadhana is called *madhurya*. Mira's longing for Krishna is a *saadhana* of this type. The *gopis* of *vrindavan* sought to realize Krishna through this type of *saadhana*. *Manqabat*, a poetic form in Persian and Urdu, expresses this type of emotion.

Swami Ramakrishna Parmahamsa was very often in *madhurya bhava*. He longed for his rebirth as a child-widow so that he could perpetually cherish *madhurya bhava* towards Lord Krishna.

Amongst most of the Kashmiri Sufi poets *madhurya bhava* is strikingly conspicuous. Sotch Kraal's several poems reveal the great Kashmiri poet in *madhurya* emotion. Transcending the limitations of sex, he seeks to realize God as a beloved. This Muslim poet reveals Vedantic predilections. He seeks complete union and merger with God. He is sometimes a bedecked maiden seeking complete dissolution of the self into God. The poet is pining away in separation like the moon eclipsed. *Madhuyrya bhava* leads him to the realization of some profound Vedantic truths. We observe Karam Buland too in this *bhava* in his several poetic compositions. Rehman Dar touches sublime heights in the poetic artifacts where *madhurya* is the predominant emotion. In one such poem the poet asks soothingly the cool sandal tree to assuage his pangs of separation, complaining that the random barbs of Love have gored his heart ruthlessly and love's canker has reduced his life-members to ashes. *Madhurya bhava* in Kashmiri poetry can be a topic for vast and interesting study. Here I am attempting only a sketchy adumbration of the subject. Some of Wahab Khar's poems are superb expressions of *madhurya bhava*. The God-intoxicated poet experiences the pangs of the lover's infidelity; offers floral tributes to the lover wandering through flowery meadows; the lover is enjoying boating on the Dal lake and the poet is pining away to catch a glimpse of Him. Wahab Khar lived in *Vastoor Van* far from the madding crowd. Besides the madhurya, he conspicuously practised *shanta saadhana*. Ahmed Batwari is surcharged with this emotion in several of his poetic compositions. Waza Mehmood expresses this emotion in a charmingly beautiful poetic diction. Ahmed Rah's lover is inexorable; he is the possessor of a charming complexion; he entices unsuspecting individuals to emotional ruin and enjoys banqueting delights in the Shalimar.

Swami Ramakrishna Parmahamsa, one of the greatest *saadhaks* of the world, performed all the *saadhanas* elucidated and described above. In the tranquil ambience of *panchavati*, the deserted cremation ground adjacent to Dakhshineswar temple, he practised the *shaanta saadhana*. As a result of it his personality began to exude unearthly peace and calm. The constant smile on his serene complexion was infectious. For practising *shanta saadhana* more effectively the Swami, for a brief period, practised Christianity assiduously. He lived the life of a devout Muslim for an effective practice of *dasya saadhana*. In the role of Hanuman he frisked about on the branches of trees eating all kinds of fruit unpeeled; wandering about dressed as a *gopi* of *vrindhavan* was an objectification of the *madhurya bhava*. In this mood he was perfectly indistinguishable from women. The boyish saunters with his comrades in Kamarpukur illustrate the practise of *sakhaya saadhana*. During the early days of his stay in *Dakshineswar*, he felt himself dogged about by Ramlala. This is a manifestation of the *vatsalya bhava*. In the popular imagination Swami Ramakrishna Parmahamsa is a devotee of the Goddess *Kali* at the *Dakshineswar* temple in Calcutta. But in reality he was a worshipper of God in all His manifestations. Like all other members of his Brahmin family Ramakrishna was initially a devotee of Lord Raghuvir. Kali worship was a later development in his religio-spiritual career. He sought to scrape away the ritualistic debris which has accumulated upon the essential Hinduism, essential Christianity and essential Islam. Ramakrishna's life was a practical demostration of the fact that the practices of all the religions of the world are equally good for the realization of God.

God is an apaodeictic reality for the devout and God-realization the highest ideal of existence. Down the centuries of civilized human life innumerable people have performed variegated austerities for realizing Him. Many idealistic philosophers have attempted to prove, through different kinds of arguments, the existence of God. Emerson, the American transcendental poet and philosopher, attributes the restlessness of the human spirit to its perpetual longing for dissolutiuon into its origin, God. Pythagoras has given geometrical, St. Anselm ontological, St . Thomax Aquinas cosmological and Rene Descartes epistemological proof about the existence of God.

[Contributed by the author as an extended form of his article that appeared earlier in 'Koshur Samahar']

Bhagavan Gopinath Ji Centenary Celebration Events ending December 1997

- Sohan Krishen Khurdi

1) Press Conference on 4th July 1997.

Mr. M.K. Tikoo, Organiser Bhagavan Gopinathji Trust alongwith Prof. J.N.Sharma adressed a press confernece on Friday, 4th of July 1997 at Press Club, Jammu.

Prof. J.N. Sharma, one of the patrons of the Bhagavan Gopinathji Trust, while talking to media persons disclosed that the birth centenary celebration of Bhagavan Gopinathji would start with a '*Shoba Yatra*' on 6th of July 1997. He said the main aim of the '*Shoba Yatra*' is to spread the message of universal brotherhood and amity which the Bhagavan taught throughout his life.

He further said that the centenary celebrations will be held during 1997-98 at many places in India and at several places abroad.

Prof. Sharma said that Bhagavanji with his divine power as a *Jagad Guru* has always solved the acute problems of devotees whereever they belong.

Giving further details, Prof. Sharma informed the media that Bhagavan Gopinathji Trust provides financial assistance to poor and deserving students, provides financial assistance for medical treatment to people suffering from various ailments and also provides such assistance on a monthly basis to destitutes, orphans and widows.

2) *Shoba Yatra* on 6th of July 1997:

Bhagawan Gopinathji Trust launched the birth centenary celebrations of Jagad Guru Bhagavan Gopinathji with *Prabhat Pheri* at Jammu. Thousands of people participated in the *Yatra*. Before the commencement of the yatra the devotees offered *pooja* to the portrait of Bhagavan Gopinathji which was placed in a decorated Gypsy for the sojourn. The shoba yatra passed through Talab-Tiloo, Canal Road, Shakti Nagar, Bakshi Nagar, Rehari, Subash Nagar, Patoli, Sarwal, New Plot, Janipur, Bantalab, Barnai and Purkhoo, Mishriwalla and Muthi camps and concluded in the afternoon at the Ashram, Bohri. People had erected welcome arches all along the route to welcome the *Yatra*. Cold water, tea and other kinds of refreshments were offered to the processionists at many points. This was a unique occasion in the history of Jammu that such a big procession was taken out.

3) *Mahajayanti* on 17th of July 1977 :

Mahajayanti was celebrated at Jammu, Delhi, Bombay and at other places with *Paduka Pooja* at 9 a.m followed by Sadhu Bhandar, Prasad and it concluded with devotional music. Thousands of people participated in the celebrations at the various centres to have the grace of Bhagavanji.

4) Guru Purnima on 21st of July 1997:

Bhagavan Gopinathji Trust on the auspicious day of Guru Purnima distributed gifts and fruit amongst the inmates - children of Viklang Ashram at Udaiwala, Bohri, Jammu.

In the afternoon a *Pushp Archana homa* was held at the feet of the Master in the Ashram in which one thousand 'Nam Mantras' were chanted in praise of Bhagavanji. Prayers were also offered for universal peace, brother-hood and the uplift of humanity.

5) Bhagavan Gopinathji DAY observed in New Jersey, U.S.A 26th of July 1997:

The birth centenary celebration of Bhagavan Gopinathji was held at Govind Mandir on Newyork Avenue in Jersey city, New Jersey on Saturday, 26th of July, 1997.

The Mayor of the city, Mr. Bret Schundler, proclaimed July 26, 1997 as Jagad Guru Bhagavan Gopinathji DAY and appealed to all the residents to celebrate the day with respect and enthusiasm.He said Bhagavanji's attributions were of great importance to mankind at present.

Prominent among those who participated in the grand function held in the Govind Mandir were Deputy Consul General of India, Mr. Kailash Aggarwal, Advisor to the Governor of New Jersey, Ms Todd Whitman, the city Indian community leader, Mr. Mone R. Sen, Mr. Mangal Gupta, founder member of National Federation of Indian Associates and Mr. Surinder Zutshi, founder of Kashmsir Solidarity, U.S.A

Dr. Jaitley was the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he said that Bhagavanji was an asset not only to Kashmir but to the entire world. His (the Bhagavan's) all-pervading spirit, he added, will continue to guide the needy and deserving as He has a mission to help those in distress through his spiritual *sidhis* or powers.

6) Bhagavan Consciousness Workshop on 17th of August 1997:

A *dharmic satsang - 'samputhpath'* was organised at Bohri Ashram, Jammu in which the members of Bhagavan *Parivar* and Baradari members, especially the young devotees, participated. It was a whole-day programme aimed at the cultivation of spiritual discipline among the participants, especially the young.

The programme started with *Guru Geeta path* followed by *Jap homa* of Bhagavanji after Prof. O.N. Chrangoo threw light on the importance of organising such programmes.

Mahimnastotra samaputh was done first, followed by *Shakhti Samputh* (1st *tav* of *Panchastavi*). It was a rich and rewarding experience for all, the value of which could be felt by the participants within their inmost souls.

7) Cold drinks served on Raksha Bandhan on 18th of August 1997:

As part of the Birth Centenary celebration of Jagad Guru Bhagavan Gopinathji a 'Chabil' was set up at Ranbireshwar temple Jammu on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan day. The devotees and the pilgrims of Amarnath Ji Swami were offered lemon water right from 8 a.m to 4 p.m. Mr. B.K. Sarup took the initiative in this service assisted by Sh. T.K. Raina, Sh. Ramesh Ji, Sh. Ashok Razdan, Sh. Sumedth Wattal, Sh. Shadi Lalji, Sh. Deepka Ji, Sh. Sanjay Koul, Sh Opinder Ji, Sh. Moti Lal Raina and Sh. Sohan ji (as per duty roaster that was issued by the Trust).

8) Satsang at Noida on Sunday, 14th September 1997

A Satsang was held at Noida on 14th of September from 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

The programme commenced with the usual obeisance to Bhagavanji followed by a discourse by Prof. C.L. Sapru on Guru Bhakti. The congregation had an enthralling experience of devotion to the Guru under the group-meditation programme organised by Sh. Ashok Khushu (Trustee).

9) *Kavi Sammelan* on 21st September 1997

A Kavi Sammelan (Guru Vandhana) was organised in the Ashram auditorium-hall at Bohri, Jammu as part of the Birth centenary celebration of Jagad Guru Bhagavan Gopinathji.

Renowned poets recited their poems in the '*sammelan*'. The 'Kavi Sammelan' was conducted by the celebrated Kashmiri poet, Shri P. N. Koul 'Sayal' and presided over by Sh. Janki Nath Koul 'Kamal'. It was attended by a large number of people who cherished the grace of Bhagavanji through the poems recited by the learned poets. Sh. Kamal dwelt at length on *Guru-Shishya* relationship in his poem.

The President of the Trust, Mr. M. L. Pandit, moved a vote of thanks.

10) Centenary discourse delivered by Sh. Janki Nath Koul 'Kamal' on 5th of Oct.'97 on "Vedantic Philosophy expounded in the Panchadashi"

As part of the Bhagavan Gopinathji Birth centenary celebrations, the first lecture in the series of centenary lectures by eminent scholars was delivered on Sunday, 5th of October before a large gathering in the Auditorium Hall of the Ashram at Bohri, Jammu.

The speaker was the eminent scholar, Pt. Jankinath Koul 'Kamal' (who, as the providence wished, went to his heavenly abode only within a fortnight of the event!). The topic was 'Vedantic Philosophy expounded in the Panchadashi'. Prof. J.N. Sharma presided over the function. Before Mr. Kamal began his presentation, Prof. A.N. Dhar delivered a brief welcome address and also introduced the guest speaker.

Prof. Dhar said that the lecure marked the beginning of a series of learned lectures proposed to be delivered at several Bhagavan Gopinath Ji centres in the country during the remaining period of Bhagavanji's birth centenary.

Prof. Sharma complimented the contents of the lecture, which he described as a scholarly presentation. He explained the essence of the lecture to the audience and also offered some useful observations on the topic.

11) 'Satsang' at Leh town on 12th of Oct. 1997:

A satsang was held at Leh town in the Radha Krishen Temple on 12th Oct. 1997 from 3 p.m to 5 p.m. The programme commenced with usual

obeisance to Bhagavanji's name followed by group meditation organised by Sh. Gopi Krishen Koul (Trustee); later, prasad was distributed among the participants.

12) Bhagavan Consciousness worship at Delhi on 26th Oct.'97.

A dharmic progamme *'Mahimnastotra Samputh path'* was held at Delhi. It started at 2 p.m with Jap Mala of Bhagavanji's 108 mantras followed by Mahimna shalokas with *Mool Mantra.* It was a blissful experience for the participants in the spiritually-charged atmosphere. Beneficial as such exercises are to the spiritual aspirants in particular, they also have a significance for the well-being of humanity at large.

At 5.30 p.m the participants were served with light refreshment whereafter they dispersed.

13) Devotional Musical Concert at Mumbai on 8th of Nov., 1997:

A Devotional Musical Concert was held at Mumbai on 8th of Nov. 1997 to mark Bhagavanji's Birth Centenary. This was a befitting commemorative programme considering the fact that Bhagavanji himself was a great lover of music.

One of the top-most saints of Maharashtra, well-known throughout the country, Param Pujya Sadguru Gagan Gad Swami Maharaj, graced the occasion with his presence. A number of artists of repute including Mr. Vijay Malla, Sh. Kaka Ji Safaya and others, kept the audience spell-bound with devotional songs. The listeners went into ecstasy and applauded the performances. In the end, light refreshment was served to the participants.

14) Centenary Discourse by Dr. B. N. Pandit on 'A Window to Kashmir Shaivism' on 9th of Nov. 1997:

A reputed Sanskrit scholar, Dr. Balji Nath Pandit, delivered a lecture on the topic 'A window to Kashmir Shaivism' at Bhagavan Gopinathji Ashram, Bohri, Udaiwala, Jammu. The lecture was the second of the series of lectures by eminent scholars planned for Bhagavanji's Birth Centenary. The function was presided over by Mr. T.N. Duloo, a well-known lawyer and spiritually elevated person, associated with the ashram as a senior devotee.

Mr. M. K. Tikoo delivered a brief welcome address, in which he introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Balji Nath Pandit and spoke of his scholarly attainments. Dr. Pandit gave first a gist of his learned paper in Kashmiri and then made his presentation in English.

The lecture was very lucid, informative and scholarly. The guest speaker was applauded by the audience. Mr. T.N. Duloo delivered an illuminating presidential address at the end.

15) 'Bhagawan Consciousness ' workshop on 16th of Nov. 1997 at the Jammu Ashram:

Another dharmic exericse of *'Mahimnastotra samaputh path'* was done at the Jammu Ashram. It started at 2 p.m with *Jap Mala* of Bhagawan Ji's 108 Mantras followed by Mahimna Shalokas with Mool Mantra. The participants remained deeply absorbed in the congregational *paath* and the whole atmosphere was filled with joy and ecstasy.

At 5 p.m the participants were served with light refreshment after the *'samputh path'* was over.

16) Centenary discourse by Prof. M. L. Kokiloo on Shaivism at New Delhi on Sunday 16th of Nov. 1997:

In the series of centenary lectures by eminent scholars a well-known Shaivism scholar Prof. M.L. Kokiloo gave a learned lecture on 'Kashmir Shaivism' on Sunday, the 16th of November 1997 at 2.45 p.m. at Bhagavan Gopinathji Ashram, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi in Hindi. The lecture was very informative and enlightening.

The participants felt very satisfied.

Later Dr. S. S. Toshkhani, a well-known Hindi poet and scholar, released the cassette 'Shradhanjali' containing the Hindi Bhajanas sung in praise of Bhagavanji including the devotional piece 'Shradhanjali to Bhagavanji' by the nationalistic poet, Sumitranand Pant.

The devotional songs recorded were appreciated for their content, musical composition and the quality of recording. Several participants spoke on the occasion,complimenting the activities of the Trust and thanking the organisers.

The assembly was offered light refreshment at the end.

17) Distribution of blankets at Old Age Home on 15th of Dec. at Jammu:

As part of Birth Centenary Celebration of Jagadguru Bhagavan Gopinathji, the Trust distributed blankets on this day amongst the inmates of 'Old Age Home' Amphalla, Jammu.

The Trust being a spiritual organisation believes that helping the poor and down-trodden in society, amounts to direct service to God which Bhagawanji exemplified throughout his life time.

18) Devotional Musical Concert at Abhinav Theatre on 28th of Dec. 1997:

This musical concert - which was restricted to devotional songs including a number of *shradhanjali's* addressed to Bhagavanji - began at 2.30 p.m sharp. All the devotees/invitees had occupied their seaets well in time and as the function started, more devotees poured in, and the hall was fully packed. At the start, Shri M.K. Tikoo, Organiser, B.G.T., introduced the chief guest Shri Jagan Nath Shivpuri, well-known musician (a veteran maestro), who was the chief guest. Shri Shivpuri inaugurated the programme with lighting the Jyoti in deep reverence to Bhagavanji's portrait installed at the dais. Paying thanks to the chief guest, Shri Tiku then introduced Sh. J. K. Koul who functioned as the compere throughout the programme and performed this duty remarkably well. Shri Kaul started by paying his homage to Bhagavaniji and before the Guru Vandana began, he introduced the artists, who presented their items individually in the following order :

(i) Smt. Renu Malla - 1 Bhajan
(ii) Smt. Sunaina Koul - 2 Bhajans
(iii) Shri Vijay Malla - 2 Bhajans
(iv) Smt. Kailash Mehra - 2 Bhajans
(v) Shi. Vijay Malla and Jeetji- sabad (2 bhajans)

The hall reverberated with the melodious songs sung by the accomplished artists and the audience listened in rapt attention, greeting each artist with thunderous applause at the end of his/her performance.

Then Prof. O. N. Bhan, Vice-President, B.G.T., thanked the artists, the audience and all others concerned with the organization of the programme. He requested the audience to participate in the recitation of 'Maha Guru Mantra' that was followed by '*Khema Astuti*'. At the end, Shri M.K. Tikoo requested all the participants to have a cup of *khava* outside the hall before they dispersed. All enjoyed the tea served to them in the open when the sun had already set.

We have pleasure in informing the readers that in order to educate general public about the significance and implication of 'Bhagavan Consciousness', Doordarshan Jammu telecast a live programme as part of the feature 'Kongposh' on 1 July 1997. The participants in the programme were Prof. J.N. Sharma, Prof. A.N. Dhar and Shri M. K. Tiku, Organiser of B.G. Trust. The well-known Kashmiri poet Shri P.N. Koul 'Sayil' who has been a consistent devotee of Bhagavanji functioned as the compere. Prof. Sharma explained all about the achievements of Bhagavanji and also dwelt at some length on the significance of what 'Bhagavan Consciousness' consists in. Prof. Dhar focussed on the contents of the B.G.T. 'Patrika' of which he is the Chief Editor, and explained in what way the journal contributes to the propogation of Bhagavanji's message. Shri Tiku spoke at length about the socio-spiritual activities and projects of the B.G.T., giving specific instances of the ways in which the institution is carrying forward the teachings and ideals of Bhagavanji. The programme concluded with a splendid musical performance by the well-known artist Kailash Mehra, who not only delighted the listeners with her melodious voice but also sang some of Bhagavanji's *vaakhs* tunefully and with solemnity.

The word ***"Om"***

24. *Isvara* (the Supreme Ruler) is a special *Purusha*, untouched by misery, actions, their results and desires.
25. In Him becomes infinite that all-knowingness which other is (only) a germ.
26. He is the Teacher of even the ancient teachers, being not limited by time.
27. His manifesting word is *Om*.
28. The repitition of this (*Om*) and meditating on its meaning (is the way).
29. From that is gained (the knowledge of) introspection, and the destruction of obstacles.

From ***'The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali'***

Readers' Response

[We are glad to reproduce below relevant excerpts from the various letters we received from a number of our readers conveying their valuable comments on the quality and content of the last issue of 'Patrika' and also some useful suggestions for further improving the quality of the journal. All of them deserve our heartfelt thanks. We are specially grateful to Susan Walters (engaged in literary work at the Ramakrishna Mission, Institute of Culture, Calcutta) and Prof. S.L. Pandit for having contributed review-articles on the 'Patrika' in question, which are included in full and appear immediately after this article. - A.N. Dhar]

1. Thank you for sending me the latest issue of the Patrika. It contains a lot of spiritual food that we need so much today. Thank you all for the laudable effort that you are making for spreading India's spiritual message to the world.

[*Prof. Santwana Dasgupta*]

2. I have gone through the July, 1997 issue of the journal 'Patrika' whose publication has been initiated to mark the centenary of the great saint of our times Bhagavan Gopinathji. Kashmir - the 'Rishi valley' - has had the distinction of giving birth to a chain of great mystics and seers who taught love for mankind and harmony with nature. As a man of science I appreciate the concern shown by many today about creating awareness among the people in the context of global environment movement. As Prof. S. Bhatt has rightly pointed out in his article that " mystics and seers have been inspired to practise harmony with nature", what we are trying to understand today as an urgent need was in fact conceived and practised by our seers including Bhagavanji through meditation. Meditation indeed is an art as well as a science which helps us to understand the world around us and the universe of which man is an integral part.

[*Dr. B.L. Kaul, Principal, Commerce College, Jammu*]

3. The Patrika now forms an important part of my reading material. Every fresh return to it is always a rewarding exeperience. Your tremendous dedication has made the Patrika a high standard Satsang magazine. May Bhagavanji shower his blessings on us in unstinted measure.

[*Prof. K. L. Moza, Gandhi College, Jammu*]

4. Patrika vol-III of July, 1997 is a befitting tribute to Bhagavan Gopinath. It is due to saints and seers from time to time that we have been able to stand the onslaughts from long past time and with their blessings we are sure to come out of the present distress and agony. Every person who bows to and invokes the blessings of Bhagavanji gets a hand-up.

All the subjects dealt within the Patrika are a vast fund of knowledge. After a careful reading of the journal I have become knowledgeable in the sphere of life which was not a branch of my studies. Please keep it up and make it broadbased by devoting more space to the Hindi section.

[*Shri R.L. Bangroo, Mineral Economist*]

5. The Patrika is being brought up in a nice way under your highly capable guidance. Arrangement of the articles can be improved. Also, like the Prabudha Bharata, it should not remain confined to a single- track subject-matter.

[*Sh. Triloki Nath Dhar from Goa*]

6. I have received my copy of 'Patrika'. I was very pleased to read the articles included therein. They are all of a good standard, and very informative.

[*Shri T.N. Dhar 'Kundan', Editor English Section*, 'KOSHUR SAMACHAR']

7. Received PATRIKA (Birth centenary number dedicated to Bhagavan Gopinathji). The get up, printing and papter etc. are superb. You have really put in your scholarly might to bring out this beautiful Number. Please accept my best congratulations.

[*Shri Arjan Dev 'Majboor' Udhampur*]

8. It was a pleasure to go through the 'Patrika' published under your editorial expertise. The journal is highlighting the rich heritage of our community in respect of the spiritual aspects of great Hindu philosophy. The selfless zeal exhibited in bringing forth the important socio-religious activities and contributions of our great spiritual personalities is laudable. I am sure, in the issue that follows, due coverage will also be given to other eminent persons of our community, who have enriched our culture from time to time. I convey my appreciations and ashirwards to the editorial staff.

[*Sh. P.N.Kaul, Bantalab, Jammu*]

9. I had received a complimentary copy of the July, 1997 issue of the Patrika. I did find some time to go through the articles contained therein and found them very interesting and inspiring. My heartiest congratulations to you for your sincere endeavours in bringing the Patrika to its present stature.

[ShriA.N.Kaul,Editor-in-Chief,'KOSHUR SAMACHAR']

Patrika, Vol. VIII, No.1, July, 1997

A Review by Prof. S .L. Pandit

I HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY of going through the above noted journal issued by Bhagavan Gopi Nath Ji Trust, and I felt like reviewing briefly some of the special features of this publication.

As Patrika is a venture mainly dedicated to the life style and stature of Bhagavan Gopi Nath Ji as a seer of our times, most of the write-ups deal with the experiences of his devotees through their personal contacts with his unique personality over a period covering an important phase of our yester years. Moreover, this particular issue of *Patrika* covers personal views of several spiritually minded persons on the unique salient contributions towards the many dimensional media of holy living in days gone by in the sacred land of Kashmir. I should like to recall briefly my own memories of my contacts with the contributions of some of these seers mentioned in this issue of Patrika.

First, about Mirza Kak of Hangalgund (1749-1835). It so happens that Hangalgund, a village close to Kokar Nag, District Anantnag, was the birth place of my own mother of blessed memory who got married to my father from the then comparatively distant Kulgam in November, 1900 A.D. In those days travelling facilities in rural Kashmir were neither so quick nor so easy as these are now. Even so I recall my several childhood visits to this lovely rural hamlet either in the company of my mother or for longer stays, by myself. I also remember how all our people in the surrounding countryside would hold also Mirza Kak in great veneration and offer worship at his simple Samadhi based on a small raised platform right in the passage of the previous health giving waters flowing down from well known source of Kokar Nag. During my later visits to this village I once managed to collect some of Kakji's *Vakyas* (verses) from a local sadhu, attempted to translate these into English and had these published in the *Pratap*, the traditional journal of Sri Pratap College, Srinagar, of which I had attained the distinction of being nominated as the first Student Editor when I had reached the final year of my B.A. course. As I learnt from some of the collaterals of Mirza Kak, he had remained a bachelor all through his life and passed his adult years in cultivating the paddy fields of his family. I recall that these *vakyas* in homely Kashmiri were composed in the tradition of the utterances attributed to Laleshwari and Sheikh Noor-ud-Din. In this context I may mention that I started writing things right from my college days and on through my professional years. I had, in fact, maintained copies of most of these publications with me over the years along with some valuable manuscript records of my family and some personal correspondence with a few eminent personalities both Indian and foreign. Alas, to my intense sorrow, all these alongwith the personal collections of my fondly loved books got lost through militancy-actuated torching and ransacking my residence at Karan Nagar, Srinagar in November, 1990.

May I next mention here that late Swami Gobind Kaul (refer to article by Sh. V.N. Drabu) was a close relative of mine whom I had known well before he attained the status of a mystic seer of international repute. In those days Swami Gobind Kaul and his elder brother, Pandit Harishwara - better known then as Harihar - were living alongwith their mother with their maternal uncle, Pandit Krishanjoo Razdan, at village Vanpoh. The latter was a well-known devotee in his own right and composed devotional songs in Kashmiri that could rank just below only to those of Pandit Parmanand of Martand (or Mattan). More about thse deeply evolved savants possibly in my next write-up. But before I close now let me conclude with my great appreciation of the very original essay by Shri T.N. Dhar 'Kundan' on the spiritual associations that could be linked with the letter "K".

How Far you Have Come !

Originally, you were clay. From being mineral, you became vegetable. From vegetable, you became animal, and from animal, man. During these periods man did not know where he was going, but he was being taken on a long journey nonetheless. And you have to go through a hundred different worlds yet.

- Jalaludin Rumi

A REVIEW OF THE JULY 1997 ISSUE OF PATRIKA

- Susan Walters

THE July issue of *Patrika* is truly inspiring, beginning with 'A message from the Heart' by Makhan Lal Pandit on the inside of the front cover. This one-page essay deals perceptively with the conditions that have led to the formation of a community of those in Kashmir who are determined to do whatever is necessary to make possible ' a return and revival' of a situation in which spiritual- oriented persons can live in peace, and by their very presence bring blessings to Kashmir, India - the world.

The writer makes an important point when he emphasizes the value of introspection in trying 'to find out the factors, if any or many, by which we ourselves have contributed, or added to our today's plight, howsoever inadvertantly...'

He calls upon those concerned about Kashmir to 'remember the fact that it will always be our spiritual and moral strength that will make us a real strong community. ' This could be the summons to all Indians, all people everywhere who want to live in a world of peace and harmony.

The Editorial by the Editor, Pran Nath Kaul, is a good introduction to this issue of Patrika. He urges us 'to ponder what our great sages and saints stood for and how, by commemorating their lives, we can reform ourselves and society at large. Our Bhagavanji was a model of truthfulness, purity and simplicity : the great values enshrined in our scriptures.'

The first article, 'Bhagavan Gopinathji : A brief Introduction', tells something about the revered holy man who is the inspiration behind *Patrika*, and whose birth centenary we are observing this year. The article is especially helpful for readers like me who have little knowledge of Gopinathji, but are attracted to his message because it is founded on the ancient wisdom of India. J. N. Sharma is the learned author of this article.

Other articles include :

-- 'Two Centenary Celebrations' by Susan Walters, an account of the centenary celebrations of the return of Swami Vivekananda from the West in 1897, and the birth the same year of Bhagavan Gopinathji. The article concludes on a hopeful note with the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'Thou blessed land of the Aryas, thou wast never degraded.'

---'Bhagavan Gopinath and the Contribution of Kashmir Mystics to the World Order of the 21st century". The author, S. Bhatt, in the course of this article quotes Western thinkers who look to India for help in solving the pressing problems of modern man. He quotes Arnold Toynbee who believes that the Western world has lost its virtue of contemplation. He says, 'So now we turn to India. This spiritual gift, that makes Man human, is still alive in the Indian soul.'

--'Was Bhagavan Gopinathji A Supermind?' by Triloki Nath Dhar. In this article, the author seems to equate a super-mind with a Divine Incarnation, such as Lord Rama. Then he lists attributes of Bhagavan Gopinathji suggesting the he is also a Supermind (Divine Incarnation) . But he concludes not with an answer to his question, but a repetition : "Was Bhagavan Gopinathji A Supermind?'

-- The following three articles, 'To Bhagavanji : A Devotee's Floral Tribute,' by C. L. Moza, 'How Bhagavanji called Me Back to his Fold.' by S.N. Bakshi, and 'My Master, Bhagavanji' by M. K. Tiku, are all well-written and inspiring personal accounts of Bhagavanji. Their authors are obviously wholeheartedly devoted to Bhagavanji.

--'The Letter'K' by T. N. Dhar (Kundan) tells of the author's fascination with the letter 'K' and mentions some of the words that are 'K' words and associated with Kashmir. For example, 'Kashmir' itself, then Krishna, Kailashpati (Shiva) and Kali. Then there is Kundalini, related to Yoga. There are other examples of K - words such as birds of rivers - - too numerous to mention. An amusing article.

-- 'Shri Krishna and the Way of Love' by A. N. Dhar is a lucid and moving study of this subject. Mirabai and her bhajans are dealt with perceptively. The final paragraph is a good summary of the whole article. It reads, in part, " --Shri Krishna's *premalila* ... points to the fact that the way of love, as an approach to the Divine, is in tune with man's psychological make-up inasmuch as he is a loving creature who hungers for his spiritual fulfilment in love, the noblest of all human emotions.'

-- 'Key to the Understanding of Lal ded' by R. N. Kaul clearly explains what went into the making of

this great saint and poet -- her harsh treatment by her mother-in-law and her own *Sadhana*. Her unconventional behaviour and her miraculous powers are described sympathetically. Though Lal Ded attained Nirvana in 1389, the author aptly concludes, ' her metaphors which clothe her mystical apractice in the form of *Vaakh* continue to inspire mankind.'

-- 'Pratyabhijna Expounded by Utpaladeva' is an important, scholarly article on a difficult subject. About Utpala's songs, the author writes, 'His own feelings and emotions, joys and sorrows and above all his intense longing as an earnest seeker of spiritual Truth are vividly pictured in the hymns. ' He sums up Utpala's philosophy of Recognition in these lines of Carol Schnieder :

Being sad with you
Is more beautiful
Than being happy
Anywhere else.

-- The poem, 'Brahman', is a translation of a Bengali poem by the author's friend. It describes a mystical experience she had.

--'Yoga and the Spiritual Path' by Aparna Dhar shows deep appreciation of India's treasure house of spiritual truths and those great souls who have uttered them, the Rishis. She passionately calls on us to

...pause a while in this fast moving material life and sit at the feet of our rishis, the spiritual Masters. Let us revere them, follow their teachings, emulate their lives and ponder over the message they have handed down to us, their children.

--'What I see as "Divine Grace" in spirituality' by A.N. Dhar is a significant but brief statement of the spiritual road, which 'lies through constant "thought study and application".' Prof. Dhar begins his article with what could well be its major point:

> God is within us, and as such within our reach. The important thing is how earnest we are to see the Divine in and around us .... Passion to seize the unknown, reinforced by thoughtful reflection, serves as the helpful means here.

This reviewer is tempted to quote the entire article. Every idea is very meaningful. -- 'Mirza Kak : A Saint Poet' by Rajinder Premi tells of Mirza Kak, a saint poet in the line of Lal Ded and Roopa Bhavani. Many interesting incidents in his life are related. One tells of his being fed by the Divine Mother who he took to be his natural mother (he had been adopted by another woman) . Later he discovered the truth - that it was the Divine Mother who had actually come to feed him. In another incident, Lal Ded in the form of a virgin showered blessings on him.

Mirza Kak wrote many *vaacks*, which, though terse, teach spiritual truths.

-- 'The Forgotten Tirtha of Bheda Devi' by Arjun Dev Majboor is the story of the author's hearing of an ancient but now neglected Kashmir shrine to Goddess Saraswati, known here as 'Bheda Devi.' Accompanied by two scholar friends, he made a trek in search of this old shrine, and at last found it -- or the ruins of what had been her shrine. They were overjoyed to find a big stone convered with mud, which when washed revealed a 'beautiful image of Saraswati' riding a swan carved on it.' The learned author states that ,

> The Goddess Saraswati or Sarda Devi has been one of their chief divinities held in esteem and worshipped in Kashmir since the land was inhabited by learned scholars who dedictaed their lives to the creative arts and to spiritual pursuits.

--'Bhagavan Gopi Nath Ji of Kashmir' is an excerpt from an article written by a writer known only as 'Philip'. He tells of celebrations of the 100th anniversary of Bhagavan Ji to he held by an organisation of devotees at a place called Glastonbell. It could be helpful if some information on Glastonbell were given, particularly where it is.

--'Swami Gobind Kaul : What his Poems Convey' by V.N. Drabu tells us of the poet Gobind Kaul. Born into a devout Shaivite family in the holy Kahsmir site knwon as Vanpoh in Anantnag, Gobind in his spiritual quest, became first very devoted to Gopala Bala Krishna - so much so that he would lose consciousness just thinking of him. His poems during this period reflect his devotion to Krishna.

Then he became similarly attratced to the Divine Mother, who 'is the dynamic aspect of the Absolute and the real object of worship'. Gobind Kaul was a great *bhakta*. As the author says, 'Like other mystic poets, he sings of pain and separation, of joy and fulfilment in the same breath ... He does not aspire for anything other than the Beloved.'

--Shiva and Philosophy of Symbols' by Ravindra Ravi begins with a description of Kashmir, its snowy peaks, and its holy men covered with ashes, which make them appear white. Thus ' that complete holiness and this whiteness would always go

together.... The Himalayan snow peaks became the central object of their (the Aryan's) love.' The various adornments of Shiva and the Kashmiri landscape thus became symbols on which the spiritual aspirant could meditate.

--'Kashmir Saivism and its Echoes in Kashmiri Poetry' by B. N. Kalla could be cosidered to be a continuation of the preceding article. It gives an account of the philosophy of Kashmir Saivism. "This philosophy had basically originated in the trans-Himalayan areas near the Kailasa around the 4th century." Abhinavagupta explained this philosophy clearly in the 10th and 11th centuries. According to this philosophy, 'The universe is nothing but an objective manifestation of His (Parma Siva's) divine powers ... The one becomes many in its active state but at the same time it holds its oneness and perfection'

The author then describes how Sufism which came to Kashmir in the 14th century combined with Saivism to produce a 'composite humanitarian thought in the valley.' Lal Ded, the great mystic poet, did much to propagate Saivism in Kahsnmir with her inspiring poems. Following her, Nunda Rishi, considered to be the founder of the Rishi cult in the valley, also wrote beautiful lyrics which were founded on Kashmir Saivism. One example reads,

He is in me, I am in Him. I experienced bliss in his company,

It was futile of me to seek Him in an alien land,
I found Him in my own country - my own self.

This and the preceding article would need another article to adequately do them justice. They compliment each other and are profound and beautiful.

--'Excerpts from the Review of '*Bhagavan Gopi Nath of Kashmir* (vol II) ",The Saint of all times' By Prof. Kashi Nath Dhar', by Philip Simpfendorfer. In this article the author states, 'The most compelling fact that the book expresses is that Bhagavan Ji died but did not perish. His energetic activity continues unabated.' He believes that Bhagavan Ji's light and power are gradually making their way in Australia, though ' Kashmir must accept its role as the hub of the World and its mighty unity consciousness in Shakti and must be forged between these two regions of the world so that a world-wide renewal can begin.'

-- Readers Response', the concluding article, is an interesting collection of letters from readers. I think the last paragraph of the last letter (by Arjan Dev Majboor) express what many of us feel ; 'The spiritual truths expounded in the articles need to be deeply pondered ... I hope the 'Patrika' will kep us alive to the spiritual heritage of Kashmir. My best wishes for this journal.'

The final pages are in Hindi, which is undoubtedly a boon to those who know that language.

UNITY	Love becomes perfect only when it transcends itself - Becoming One with its object; Producing Unity of Being
THE TEACHER	The ruler is a shepherd and his flock is the people. He has to help them and save them, not to exploit and destroy them. Is the shepherd there for the flock, or the flock for the shepherd?
LOVE	Ordinary human love is capable of raising man to the experience of real love.

- so said ***Hakim Jami***

A Brief History of
Bhagavan Gopinath Ji Trust and its Constitution

- Pran Nath Kaul

IMMEDIATELY after Bhagavan Gopinath Ji attained his *Mahasamadhi* on 28th of May, 1968, his close devotees felt strongly the need of keeping alive the great Master's spiritual undertakings. Considering the supreme state of awareness he had attained and having widely been acclaimed as a Jagad Guru, the following devotees formed themselves into a body designated as 'Bhagavan Gopinath Ji Trust'. Considered thenceforth as the founder members of the Trust, they started functioning as such under the late **Shri S. N. Fotedar** as **the founder patron** :

1. (Late) Shri Shridhar Joo Dhar
2. (Late) Shri Hakim Sham Lal Bhat
3. Shri Pran Nath Kaul
4. Shri Gopinath Dhar
5. Shri Badri Nath Kaul
6. Shri Brij Nath Tiku
7. Shri Gwash Lal Malla
8. Shri Anand Joo Kaul
9. Shri Madhav Joo Sathu
10. Shri Jawahar Lal Malla
11. Shri Shankar Nath Zadoo
12. Shri Janki Nath Khar
13. (Late) Shri Swami Amrita Nanda
14. Shrimati Jai Kishori Patwari

Twelve years thereafter, i.e. on 28th October, 1980, a revised Constitution of the Trust was drafted and unanimously adopted, and the strength of Trustees was raised to 31. Subsequently, on 17th June, 1994, the Trust-deed was got registered at New Delhi by the Secretary, Shri Pran Nath Kaul as the settler for the establishment of the Trust. The Trust-deed provides that the registered office of the Trust shall operate at Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi- 110 048.

Aims and Objects of the Trust

i) To augment the monetary resources of the Trust by collecting/accepting donations/contributions in cash/ kind from any person(s) , Firm(s), Company(ies), Corporation(s), Association(s),Institution(s), Trust or Trustee(s) against proper receipt for furthering the aims and objects of the Trust as hereinafter mentioned.

ii) To spread Bhagavan Ji's message of love, peace, purity of life, fellow-feeling and universal brotherhood, and to disseminate, meaningfully, through (a) publications, visual and audio media, (b) through the teachings, ideals, philosophy and life of Bhagavanji - which will benefit every one and also help in the moral and spiritual uplift of people.

(iii) To provide relief and succour to indigent destitutes orphans, widows and the physically or mentally handicapped through financial grants, educational and medical aid and also through social counselling.

(iv) To strive to preserve and propogate the teachings/ philosophies of our ancient sages and seers, relating to our religion and culture.

(v) To hold meetings/gatherings for prayers, bhajans, discourses, yajnas, homas, discussions, in order to disseminate Bhagavanji's message/teachings.

(vi) To establish, from time to time, centres of spiritual activities in the shape of 'Ashrams' at various places in the country and abroad, in furtherance of the aims and objects spelt out herein above (the choice of the 'Ashram' to be decided upon by the Trust).

(vii) To undertake any other activity or activities of a charitable nature which may advance the aims and objects or lead to their fulfilment.

Functions of the Trust

The trust shall be run by 31(thirty one) Trustees, to be designated collectively as the 'Board of Trustees'. They are appointed for a life-term each (subject to the terms and conditions governing the appointment and removal of the Trustees). These trustees have been appointed in view of their long and dedicated services in spreading Bhagavanji's message of love, peace and universal broherhood and the spiritual uplift of all - what are comprehended in the phrase 'functions of the Trust'. The Board of Trustees comprises the following members :

(Sarvashri) Ashok Kumar Kaul, Ashok Kumar [illegible] Ashok Kumar Razdan, Badrinath Fotedar, Bh[illegible]al Mattoo, Chaman Lal Moza, Deepak Kumar Razdan, [illegible]pi Kishen Kaul, Hari Krishan Mirza, Hriday Nath Fotedar (Shrimati) Jaikishori Pathwari, Jawahar Lal Malla, Kanhaya Lal Bhat, Makhan Lal Pandit, Mohan Kishen Tikoo, Mukesh Safaya, Madhusudan Shakdhar, (Prof.) Omkar Nath Chrangoo, Opendra Kumar Bhat, Pran Nath Kaul, Roshan Lal Bhat, Sanjay Khazanchi, Satish Kumar Razdan, Shadi Lal Ganju, Shiban Krishen Turki, Sohan Krishen Khurdi, Sumedh Kumar Wattal, Susheel Kumar Wattal, Tej Krishen Raina and Tej Krishen Kak.

Patrons :

(Late) Shri S. N. Fotedar and (Late) Justice S. N. Katju were Founder Patron and Chief Patron

respectively.

The following devotees are selected as Patrons of the Trust (who have continued to function as such) :

1. Prof. J.N, Sharma
2. Prof. O. N. Bhan
3. Mr. Philip Simfendorfer
4. Shri J. L. Fotedar
5. Major (Rtd.) R. K. Raina

Office Bearers:

The Board of Trustees shall elect (from among the existing Trustees) by a majority decision, the following office-bearers, who will function for a term of five years each :

(i) President (ii) Secretary (iii) Organizer (iv) Treasurer. These positions are held at present by Shri Makhan Lal Pandit, Sh. Pran Nath Kaul, Shri Mohan Kishen Tiku and Shri Satish Kumar Razdan respectively.

Managing Body :

A seven member Managing Body, consisting of the Trustees Shri M. L. Pandit, Shri M.K. Tiku, Shri Satish Razdan, Shri S. K. Turki, Shrimati Jaikishori Pathwari, Shri Tej Krishen Raina and Shri P. N. Kaul, has been formed to carry on the day-to-day activities of the Trust. Also, Managing Commitees comprising the following Trustees/devotees have been constituted to look after the affairs of the Ashrams at places indicated :

A- Kharyar, Habba-kadal, Srinagar

(Sarvashri) Mukesh Safaya, Ashok Nijhan, Inderji Kaul, Sanjay Teng, I/C Yograj Bradoo, Sudheer Kaw

B- Udiawala, Bohri, Jammu

(Sarvashri) M. K. Tiku, I/C Jaya Ji, Sumedh Wattal, Deepak Razdan, Tej Krishen, Ashok Razdan, Opinder Bhat, T. K. Kak, S. K. Turki, M. L. Kak

C- Pamposh Enclave, Nehru Place, New Delhi :

Shri M. L. Pandit, H. N. Fotedar, Satish Razdan, B. L. Razdan, A. K. Khushu, R. L. Dhar, I/C P. N. Kaul.

Genera.l Body :

The General Body of the Trust shall comprise all the devotees of Bhagavan Gopinath Ji whose names have been listed in the Register of devotees to be maintained by the Secretary or his nominee(s) and updated at the end of every (financial) year.

Clear guidelines and rules have further been provided in the constitution relating to "Meetings and Quorum', 'Annual Accounts' and 'Annual Report' 'Bank Accounts', 'Investments'. passage of 'Resolutions', 'Minute Books', 'Rules, Regulations and Amendments (thereof), 'Removal of Trustees', 'Powers of Office Bearers - Organizer, Cashier, Treasurer, In-Charge Stores, 'Directive Principles' [defining the scope of the various activities of the Ashrams, eschewing politics, emphasis on single-minded devotion to the image of Bhagavanji (as our *Sadguru*), sticking to the practice of conferring no title on any office-bearer, etc].

The Trust is authorized to appoint any trustee or devotee to an office for the furtherance of its objectives. Accordingly, the names of the various functionaries and the positions held by them at present (including positions specifically created, under rules, to meet special needs) are givn below :

Chief Editor 'Patrika'	: Prof. A.N. Dhar.
Cashier(Jammu)	: Er. Sumedh Wattal
I/C Relics (Jammu)	: Dr.Tej Krishen Kak
I/C Library	: Sh. Upendra Bhat
I/C Publication, stock & sale (Jammu)	: Er. Deepak Razdan
Electrical maintenance	: Er. Ashok Razdan.
Building Maintenance	: Er. M. L. Kak
I/C Publication stock and Sale (Delhi)	: Sh. Susheel Kaul
I/C General stocks (Delhi)	: Sh. B. L. Razdan
Financial Advisor	: Sh. Upender Bhat, C.A
I/C Office & General Stock (Jammu)	: Sh. Tej Krishen Raina.

1968 and after :

Speical Tribute to (Late) Shri S. N. Fotedar.

It is befitting to remember all the noble souls who (i) inspired the devotees of Bhagavanji (after he attained *Mahasamadhi*) to follow the Master's path in the true spirit and (ii) contributed significantly to the establishment of the present Trust and the Ashrams that are dedicated to the Bhagavan. These noble souls, no doubt, deserve our gratitude. The one name that stands pre-eminent among them is none other than the late Shri S.N. Fotedar, who did a commendable job in writing the most highly cherished book, the widely read/ acclaimed biography of Bhagavanji. He took great pains, and showed remarkable resourcefulness in bringing together his reminiscences (of his own contact with the Bhagavan) and presenting a vivid picture of Bhagavanji accompanied by a lucid narration of the events of his saintly life. But for this creative contribution, the illuminating life-story of Bhagavan Gopinath Ji would have been lost to posterity. Undoubtedly Shri Fotedar was well qualified (and remarkably equipped with will and determination) to write on a difficult subject such as the spiritual eminence and achievement of Bhagavanji, largley through the grace of the great Master that he enjoyed abundantly. Gifted with an analytical mind and a keenly observant eye, he spent more than two decades in close association with Bhagavanji. It is also worth mentioning here that Shri Fotedar could inspire his friends as also the members of his family to collaborate with him in collecting funds and in fully co-operating with him in constructional work. His devoted wife, popularly known as 'Dhani', was the main source of his strength as a *sadhak*. During this auspicious year, we must salute him with reverance and profound regards.

जब शब्द सामर्थ्य खो देते हैं

- अर्जुन देव मजबूर

कश्मीर की सन्त परम्परा एक अक्षुण्य जल-धारा की तरह रही है। यह बराबर आज तक बहती चली जा रही है । इसी धारा के पूज्य सन्तों में श्री भगवान गोपीनाथ जी का नाम अत्यन्त उल्लेखनीय है । इस महा सन्त के दर्शन जिन्होंने भी किए हैं वे सचमुच धन्य हैं ।

आज से कोई पन्द्रह वर्ष पूर्व की बात है कि पद्मश्री मोतीलाल साक़ी और श्री इक़बालनाथ वनपुह मुझे सोमयार स्थित भगवान जी के आश्रम में ले गए। श्री इकबालनाथ वनपुह वासी का स्वर्गवास हो चुका है किन्तु उन्होंने कश्मीरी पंडितों के कई उत्सवों, पर्वो और रीति रिवाजों पर खोज पूर्ण लेख लिखें हैं । वे साधु सन्तों के आश्रमों पर प्राय: जाया करते थे ।

बाहर से ही लगता था कि इस स्थान में शान्ति का साम्राज्य है । हमने इस सन्त को नमन किया और अपना स्थान ग्रहण किया । कई लोग बैठे थे जो दर्शनार्थ आए हुए थे । कइयों के मन में समस्याएँ रही होंगी, जिनका वे भगवान जी से समाधान चाह रहे थे । किसी के मन की दशा साधु लोग ही जान सकते हैं ।

कमरे में स्तब्धता छाई थी । मेरे मन में कोई प्रश्न या समस्या न थी । मैं चुपचाप देख रहा था ।

श्री गोपीनाथ जी ने पट्टू का फेरन पहना हुआ था । वे प्राय: गर्मी में भी यही फेरन पहना करते थे ।

ठण्ड या गर्मी तो हम जैसे शरीर धारियों को लगती है एक पहुँचे साधु के लिए भर्तृहरि ने क्या खूब कहा है :-

महाशय्या पृथ्वी विपुलभुपधानं भुजलताम ।
वितानं चाकाशो व्यजनमनुकूलोऽयमनिलः
शरच्चन्द्रो दीपो विरतिवनिता संगमुदितः ।
सुखी शांता शेते मुनिरतनु मूर्तिमुनिरिव ।।

अर्थ - सभी इच्छाओं से स्वतन्त्र होकर वह एक राजा के समान प्रसन्न रहता है । भूमि उसका पर्यकं (पलंग), भुजाएँ उसका तकिया होती हैं, आकाश उसका शामियाना, चन्द्रमा दीपक, त्यागवृत्ति उसकी सहधर्मिनी और दिशाओं की परिधि उसकी नौकरानी होती है जो उस पर पंखा करती हैं ।

सन्त एक छोटे से आसन पर बैठे थे। यह आसन अन्य बैठने वालों से ऊँचा न था। उन्होंने एक पगडी बांधी हुई थी और शान्त हो कर चिलम पी रहे थे । कमरे में आज के साधुओं की तरह किसी भी प्रकार के सुख साधन उपलब्ध न थे। न रेशमी तकिये, न ऊंचा तखतपोश, न नर्म नर्म बिस्तर। एक काँगडी रखी थी उनके सामने उस में भी कोई तेज़ अग्नि न थी ।

उनके सम्बन्ध में कहा जाता है कि एक बार जब उनका अनुयायी माँगने पर भी आग प्राप्त न कर सका तो उन्होंने हुक्के में एक कश लगाया और चिलम में अग्नि प्रज्वलित हुई । वैसे वे चमत्कारों के पीछे भागने वाले साधु न थे ।

सब कुछ छोड कर उन्होंने स्व की खोज करके वह पद पा लिया था जिसे जीवन मुक्त कहा जाता है ।

मैं और अन्य लोग चुप चाप बैठे उनकी ओर ध्यान से देख रहे थे । इसी बीच कहवा आया। सब को कांसी के पात्रों (खोस) में कहवा बाँटा गया। यह प्रशाद था और इसमें आत्मिक मिठास थी जिसका अनुभव विरले ही कर सकते हैं ।

बौद्ध ग्रन्थों में एक कथा आती है और वह इस प्रकार है कि जब महात्मा बुद्ध ने अन्तिम सभा बुलवाई तो इसमें हज़ारों भिक्षु सम्मिलित हुए । सभी महात्मा बुद्ध के मुख से कुछ अन्तिम उपदेश सुनने के अभिलाषी थे । एक स्टेज बनाया गया था ताकि बुद्ध को सब देख सकें । महात्मा बुद्ध ठीक समय पर आए । वह मंच पर बैठे, सब को अपनी विशेष मुख-मुद्रा से आनन्दित कर, उन्होंने सामने रक्षा कमल पुष्पों का गुलदस्ता हाथ में लिया और गुलदस्ते को एक छोर से दूसरे छोर तक

दिखाते हुए इसे अपनी जगह रख दिया । यही था उनका अन्तिम उपदेश। और इस परिदृश्य से अर्थ निकालने के लिए महा बौद्ध पंडितों ने दर्जनों लेख और प्रपत्र लिखे हैं ।

जब भावनाएँ गहन होती हैं और किसी ने कुछ प्राप्त किया होता है तो वह उस प्राप्ति का शब्दों में कैसे वर्णित करे जो अमूर्त है । ठीक यही दशा थी उस सभा की । सब के मुख पर मुहर सी लगी हुई थी ।

मान्यवर सन्त गोपीनाथ बैठे थे, संसार की चिन्ताओं, दुविधाओं से पूर्णतयः मुक्त और इस दशा की प्राप्ति कोई साधारण व्यक्ति को नहीं हो सकती ।

समय थम सा गया था । मैं सब कुछ भूल कर काफी समय तक बैठा हरा सोचता रहा और इसी दशा में खो सा गया ।

कोई कुछ न बोल पाया । शब्द अपना सामर्थ्य खो चुके थे और विचारों में ठहराव सा आ गया था । इसके आगे क्या है, क्या होगा, कौन जान सकता था ।

कुछ समय बैठ कर हम इस सन्त को पुनः एक बार देख कर उठे, नमन किया और चले आए ।

आज जब पत्रिका के सम्पदक महोदय ने मुझ से लिखने को कहा तो मैं ने इसी दृश्य को चित्रित करना चाहा जो पन्द्रह वर्ष से मेरे मस्तिष्क पटल पर अंकित है । कश्मीर के सन्तों की परम्परा वितस्ता और विशोका की तरह सदा प्रवाहित होती रहे । यही मेरी हार्दिक कामना है ।

साधो यही घड़ी यही बेला ।।
लाख खरच फिर हाथ न आवे मानुष जन्म सुहेला ।।
ना कोई संगी ना कोई साथी जाता हंस अकेला ।।
क्यों सोया उठ जाग सवेरा काल मारेगा सेला ।।
कहत कबीर गुरु वानी गावो झूठा है सबमेला ।।

लोभ सरस अवगुण नहीं, तप नहीं सत्य समान ।
तीरथ नहीं मन शुद्धि सम, विद्या सम धनवान ।।

श्वास श्वास पै नाम ले, वृथा श्वास मत खोय ।
ना जाने उस श्वास का, जावन होय न होय ।।

–कबीर

कागा सब तन खाइयो चुन चुन खाइयो मास
ये दो नयना मत खाइयो पिया दर्शन की आस ।।

– मीरा

नीरवता की गहराइयों में डूबने का आनन्द

- पृथ्वीनाथ मधुप

जहाँ जीवन है वहाँ शब्द है। शब्द न हो तो जीवन का अर्थ ही बदल जाए । संसार की प्रगति रुक जाए । शब्द के बिना सृष्टि के सरताज मानव की क्या दशा हो जाए, अनुमान लगाना कठिन नहीं । शब्द की शक्ति, इसकी शाश्वतता इसकी व्यापकता-विस्तार एवं महत्त्व आदि को नज़र में रखते हुए ही इसे 'शब्द ब्रह्म' कहकर ब्रह्म का एक रूप ही माना गया है । ऐसा कह कर शब्द में समाहित सभी बातों को उजागर किया गया है ।

साधारणत: कानों से सुनी जाने वाली ध्वनि को शब्द कहा जाता है । ध्वनि के साथ ही इसमें अर्थ भी समाहित रहता है अत: शब्द ध्वनि और अर्थ का समन्वय है । वैयाकरणों ने शब्द को एक या अधिक ध्वनियों की वह लघु इकाई कहा है जिसका कोई अर्थ हो तथा प्रयोग की दृष्टि से जिसकी स्वतन्त्र सत्ता हो । अधिसंख्य लोगों को शब्द का अर्थ एक सीमा तक ही ले जाता है; पर सिद्धहस्त शब्द साधकों द्वारा प्रयुक्त शब्द के अर्थ की पहुँच इस सीमा से आगे, बहुत आगे भी है । इसी सीमा के आगे की प्रविष्ठि को नीरवता कहा जाता है । श्रेष्ठ कवियों-लेखकों तथा बहुत अच्छे पाठकों- श्रोताओं को काफी साधना तथा अभ्यास के बाद नीरवता से साक्षात्कार हो जाता है । अपनी रचनाओं को कागज़ पर उतारने से पहले भी कवि-लेखक को नीरवता की गहराइयों में बहुत गहरे तक डूबना पड़ता है । हिन्दी कविता के शिखर पुरुष सच्चिदानन्द हीरानन्द वात्स्यायन अज्ञेय का 'पहले में सन्नाटा बुनता हूँ' इसी ओर इ ारा करता है । श्रेष्ठ कवियों के शब्द नीरवता के इस पार से अधिक उस पार ज़्यादा बोलते हैं । कवि टी० एस० एलियट की श्रेष्ट कविता ' फोर क्वाटयटस ' के बारे में डेनिस डनधू कहते हैं कि वे एक ऐसे शब्द-साधक थे जिन्हें नीरवता से प्यार था । उनकी श्रेष्ठ कविता में शब्द ध्वनि का एक भाग तथा नीरवता तीन भाग हैं । वे नीरवता में विचारते, महसूस करते और स्मरण करते थे ।[1] कहा जा सकता हे कि नीरवता ाब्द देती है और शब्द नीरवता के पथ का यात्री बना देता है ।

ज्यों तिल माही तेल है, ज्यों चकमक में आग।
तेरा साई तुज्ज में, जाग सके तो जाग ।।

विद्यार्थी जीवन से गुज़रते हुए एक पाठ्य पुस्तक में सेकलित संत कबीर जी की उक्त पंक्तियाँ मुझे बहुत परेशान करती रहीं । ठीक है, तिलों में का तेल और चकमक पत्थरों में की आग इन दोनों वस्तुओं की ओर देखने से दिखाई नहीं देती । इन में का तेल और आग तभी दिखाई देगी जब तिलों को कोल्हू में डाला जाए और चकमक के पत्थरों को आपस में टकराया जाए । पर, हमारा साई (परमात्मा) हमारे भीतर कहाँ है ? उस साई के दर्शन के लिए क्या किया जाए ? क्या छुरीं से अपने शरीर को काटा जाए तभी उसके दर्शन होंगे ? शल्य-चिकित्सक कितने ही शरीरों की चीर-फाड करते हैं । क्या उन्हें किसी के अन्दर के साई दिखें ? नहीं ना। फिर ! कई सहपाठियों से पूछा । बोले कविता है । कवि पागल होते हैं और कविता बकवास । यह सांइन्स थोडे ही होती है । चुप रह गया था मैं । परेशानी से छुटकारा नहीं पाया था ।

अध्यापन-काल में उक्त दोहे की भी कक्षाओं में व्याख्या करनी पड़ी। 'जाग सके तो जाग'। हम सोये हैं ? सोये ही तो हैं। हमारी अन्दर की आँखें बन्द हैं । ये नीरवता की गहराई में डूबने पर ही खुलेंगी । इन्हीं गहराइयों में ' तेरा साई तुज्ज' में के असली अर्थ से सामना होगा । ऐसा होने से हम अपने अन्दर के साई को देख सकेंगे । कितना आनन्ददायक होगा वह क्षण !! इससे कभी बिछुड़ना नहीं चाहेंगे हम । कश्मीरी काव्य की आदिकवयित्री महायोगिनी माँ लल्लेश्वरी के

एक 'वाख'[2] का पूर्वार्द्ध है :-

ग्वोरन वोनुम कुनुय वअचुन

न्यऽबॅरुॅ दो'पुन अन्दर अऽचुन . . .

- गुरु महाराज ने एक ही बोल कहा कि बाहर से अन्दर हो लो ---

न्यऽबॅरुॅ दोपुनम अन्दर अऽचुन' - बाहर से अन्दर होने को कहा । बाहर से अन्दर होना नीरवता की गहराइयों में डूबना ही है । साधु-महात्मा महीनों तक मौन रखते थे । क्यों ? ध्यान की पृष्ठभूमि क्या है ? सोचिये ।

अनाहद/अनाहत नाद-साधक आंखें किसी शान्त-एकान्त में बैठ कर आँखें बन्द करके हाथों के अंगूठों से दोनों कान बन्द कर देते हैं । शुरु शुरु में उन्हें एक झरने की सी आवाज़ सुनाई देती है । कुछ समय बाद चिड़ियों क चहकने की-सी आवाज़, फिर कुछ समय तक शंख बजने की आवाज़, उसके बाद 'ओ३म' की मोहक एवं मधुर ध्वनि का श्रवण होता है । इसके बाद ही इन्हें परम प्रकाश स्वरूप परमात्मा के दर्शन एवं असीम आनन्द की प्राप्ति होती है । इसका आशय यह हुआ कि दृष्यमान (आँखों से दिखाई देने वाले) तथा शब्दायमान (कानों से सुनाई देने वाले) संसार से अलग होकर नीरवता की गहराइयों में डूब जाने पर भी दिखाई और सुनाई देता है। यह कहना ग़लत न होगा कि नीरवता में जाकर ही असली आंखें और कान खुलते हैं ।

उपनिषद् कहता है - न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग नो मन: । - वहाँ (प्रभु तक) न दृष्टि जाती है, न वाणी (शब्द) और न ही मन । फिर साधक कैसे देखते-सुनते हैं ? क्या उपनिषद् गलत कहता है ? नहीं, नहीं । उपनिषद् नीरवता में देखी-सुनी आदि की बात नहीं करता । इस शरीर की भौतिक आँख-कान की बात करता है । उपनिषद् शब्देतर शब्द (शब्दों से परे के शब्द), दृष्टितर दृष्टि (नज़र के परे की नज़र) या मनेतर मन (मन के परे के मन) की बात नहीं करता क्योंकि इनकी कोई सीमा नहीं होती । सीमा होती है इस आँख, शब्द और मन की जिनका उपयोग हम दैनिक सांसारिक जीवन में करते हैं ।

ऊपर कही बातों से स्पष्ट है कि नीरवता की गहराइयों में जाकर चरम के परम तक पहुँचा जा सकता है । कश्मीरी के सुविख्यात भक्त कवि परमानन्द जी यही निम्न पंक्तियों द्वारा सम्प्रेषित करना चाहते हैं :-

अऽन्दरी अऽचू अन्दर

तति छुय शेवुॅ मन्दर

तऽथ्य अन्दर श्यामुॅ स्वो'न्दर

साख्याथ रामुॅ - रामय

अर्थात् - अन्दर से ही अन्दर (नीरवता की गहराइयों में) चले जाओ । वहाँ शिवालय है । इसी में श्याम सुन्दर, भगवान कृष्ण हैं जो साक्षात्! श्रीराम चन्द्र जी हैं ।

भगवान के नामों में कोई भिन्नता नहीं है । उसके हज़ारों लाखों नाम हैं । इसी बात को अनाथों के नाथ भगवान सत्य साई बाबा यों समझाते हैं : ' राम, कृष्ण, ईश्वर, साई नामों में कोई फर्क नहीं मानना चाहिए क्योंकि ये सभी नाम मेरे ही नाम हैं ' ।

नीरवता की गहराइयों म डूबने पर प्रभु के अनेक नाम - रूपों के ऐक्य का पता चलता है । इन गहराइयों में जाने पर ही भगवान के कल्याणकारी (शिव) रूप, साक्षात प्रेम (कृष्ण) रूप तथा आदर्श (राम) रूप का वास्तविक प्रज्ञान हो जाता है । प्रभु साक्षात्कार से परमानन्द की प्राप्ति होती है ।

ऋषि कश्यप की धरती अनेक ऋषि मुनियों के चरणों से पूत ऋषि-वाड़ी कश्मीर को गौरवान्वित करने वाले परम सन्त भगवान गोपीनाथ जी महाराज अधिकतर नीरवता की गहराइयों में डूबे रहकर प्रभु-साक्षात्कार का आनन्द लेते रहते थे। इस बात का पता इनके चरितात्मक निबन्ध की निम्न पंक्तियों से चलता है :-

१- श्रीनगर के विभिन्न स्थानों में या श्रीनगर के बाहर के विविध देवस्थानों में रहते समय भगवान जी अपने आसन पर पूरे चौबीसों घंटे बैठे हुए परब्रह्म के ध्यान में निरन्तर रूप से निग्न रहा करते थे ।[4]

२- प्रति प्रात: काल वे (भगवान जी) अपना मुख

और यज्ञोपवीत एक नल पर धोते थे और पुन: अपने आसन पर बैठ जाते थे । फिर वे अगले प्रात: तक या कभी-कभी 48 घंटों तक आसन को लघु ंका तक के लिए भी नहीं छोड़ते थे ।[5]

३- आकाश की ओर दृष्टि लगाये वे कुछ रुक-रुक कर अपनी चिलम पिया करते थे । प्राय: उनकी चिलम से जलती हुई चिंगारियाँ उनके चोला (जिसे कश्मीरी में फिरन कहते हैं) पर या उनके आसन पर गिरती और जला कर उसे छेद कर देती । अधिकतर अपनी गहरी ध्यान-मगनता के कारण उन्हें इसका भान तक न होता ।[6]

४- अपना भोजन या चाय लेते समय भी वे क्या खा-पी रहे हैं इस ओर कोई ध्यान देते प्रतीत नहीं होते थे और असीम में ही मग्न रहते थे ।[7]

उक्त उद्धृत अंश इस बात को रेखांकित करने के लिए काफी हैं कि भगवान जी अपने समय में से लगभग पूरा समय ही नीरवता की गइराइयों में डूबे रह कर प्रभु साक्षात्कार के परमानन्द में निमग्न रहते थे । इस अवस्था में उन्हें बहुत लम्बे समय तक एक ही आसन पर रहने की पीड़ा, खाने-पीने या कपड़ों के जलने की चिन्ता क्यों रहती ! वे तो सर्वव्यापक-सर्व शक्तिमान के साथ मिल कर एक हो गये होते थे । नीरवता की गहराइयों में डूबना असीम .आनन्द है इसकी ाहादत स्वयं भगवान जी हैं ।

1- T. S. Eliot was a man of words who loved silence. Indeed in his greatest poem, the words are one part of sound and three parts of silence in which he pondered, felt and remembered.

See *Four Quartets*, ed. B. Borgonzi, p. 212.

2- कश्मीरी कविता का, चार पंक्तियों का एक विशष छन्द ।

3- ..... no distinction should be made between the names - Rama, Krishna, Ishwara, Sai - for they are all of them, My names - "*Sai Baba and His Message*" ed. Dr. S.P. Ruhela and Dr. Duanem Robinson, p. 309.

4- देखिए भगवान गोपीनाथ जी, कश्मीर (एक चरितात्मक निबन्ध) छटा अध्याय, प ० 22 प्रकाशक : भगवान गोपीनाथ जी ट्रस्ट, श्रीनगर

5- - वही - तीसरा अनुच्छेद, पृ० 22

6- -वही पृ०, 23

7- - वही पृ०, 26

ध्यान मूलं गुरोः मूर्तिः पूजा-मूलं गुरोः पदम् ।
मन्त्र-मूलं गुरोः वाक्यं मोक्ष-मूलं गुरोः कृपा ।।

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पोत जूनि वथिथ मो'त बोलुँनोवुम,
दग ललुँनावुँम दयि सुँज़िं प्रये ।
ललि ललि करान लाल वुज़नोवुम,
मीलिथ तस मन श्रोच्योम दिह ।।

Rising in the last watch of the moonlit night
I made my wayward mind repeat His name.
I bore the pangs of His Love, woke my beloved
Saying, 'Here is Lalla, Lalla, Lalla',
My body got purified when my mind
Attained oneness with Him.

- Lal Vakh (verse)

कश्मीरी जन-जीवन में धार्मिक सौहार्द

- अवतारकृष्ण राज़दान

कश्मीर भारत का मुकुटमणि होने के साथ-साथ एशिया महाद्वीप का सुन्दरतम स्थान माना जाता है । यदि भौगोलिक दृष्टिकोण से इसका सर्वेक्षण किया जाए तो ऐसा लगता है कि यह क्षेत्र एकदम संसार से कटा हुआ है क्योंकि इसके हर छोर पर हमें दुर्गम पर्वतमालाओं की श्रृँखलाएँ उत्तरोत्तर प्रव द्धि के साथ खिसकती हुई नज़र आती हैं और उस पर तुर्रा यह कि इसकी इन पर्वत श्रृँखलाओं के भीतर या आस-पास कई ऐसे स्थान हैं जिनका क मीर के भूगोल में अपना एक विशष स्थान है । इनके बिना क मीर की उत्पत्ति सिद्ध नहीं हो सकती, न इनका कश्मीर के बिना कोई महत्व है, भले ही ये भारी हिमपात होने पर, कई महीने तक कश्मीर से कट कर रह जाते हैं । यहां इनका उल्लेख करना ठीक नहीं रहेगा क्योंकि इन सब स्थानों को लेकर ही हम क मीर की उत्पत्ति मानते हैं । किन्तु आज तक क्या कभी हमने संसार के किसी ऐसे स्थान का नाम सुना है जिसका अपना एक वि ो ा जन-जीवन नहीं है ? नहीं, ऐसी बात नहीं है । कश्मीर में भी अपना एक विशष जन-जीवन का प्रवाह रहा है जिसके सम्बन्ध में विद्वानों का कहना है कि यह मोहन-जोदडो और हड़प्पा के निकट ठहरता है । इस तरह की काल-गणना क मीर के 'नियोलिथिक युग' 'बुर्ज़होम' सूत्र संकेत से एककदम निकट ठहरती है । यही से कश्मीरियों के धार्मिक और सांस्कृतिक कृत्य शुरु होने लगे हैं और तब से आज तक इस भू-क्षेत्र में कई धार्मिक एवं सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियां होती आई हैं जिनमें तिब्बत की धर्म-परम्परा, मध्य-एशिया तथा भारतीय संस्कृति सम्मिलित है ।

प्राचीन काल में कश्मीर में नाग जाति के लोग आबाद होने के प्रमाण मिलते हैं । इनके सम्बन्ध में कहा जाता है कि ये झील या चश्मों के तटों पर यहां रहते थे। इनके विषय में विद्वानों के कई मत हैं अलबत्ता इस बात को नकारा नहीं जा सकता कि ये अनार्य थे । इनका झील या चश्मों के तटों पर आवास करना आज भी यहां की लोकोक्तियों में प्रचलित है । कश्मीर में आज भी च मे या झील को नाग कहते हैं और इसके पानी को गंगा जल से भी पवित्र मानते हैं । उस समय इस जन-जाति का धर्म क्या था, निश्चित रूप से कुछ नहीं कह सकते । फिर भी नाग-पूजा आजकल कश्मीर में ही नहीं बल्कि यह भारत के कई भागों में भी की जाती है । अनार्य होने के कारण यहां की नाग-जाति का अपना अलग स्थान था । किन्तु इनके धर्म सौहार्द की भावना उस समय आंकी जाती है जब इनके समय इस भू-स्थंली पर यक्ष जाति के पि ाचों ने प्रवे ा किया और दोनों जातियों में परस्पर युद्ध छिड़ने पर भी अन्त में नाग-जाति के लोगों ने उनके साथ समझौता करके सौहार्द से रहना स्वीकार किया और उस समय इनका आपसी मेल-झोल ऐसा ही था जिस तरह भारत में द्रविड़ और आस्द्रिक लोगों का रहा था । वे मानव-मूल्यों को व्यक्तिगत और जाति मर्यादा की संज्ञा में बांटने लगे और वे इसको किसी भी मूल्य पर नष्ट नहीं करना चाहते थे और जब पिशाच पूरी तरह बसने लगे तो आर्यो ने पिशाचों के कुछ उत्सवों को कश्मीरी समुदाय में रचने का निर्देश दिया । इनमें 'यक्ष-अमावसी' 'गाड़बत' 'कावपुन्यम' आदि सम्मिलित हैं जो अब यहाँ के त्यौहार बन गए हैं । इतना ही नहीं पिशाचों और नागों के बीच इतने मधुर सम्बन्ध स्थापित होने लगे कि पिशाची को आर्य भाषा परिवार में सम्मिलित किया गया और संस्कृत नाटकों में इसका प्रयोग होने लगा । यहॉ मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि क मीर के आदि जन या नाग-जाति के धर्म सौहार्द की भावना को देखकर ये आज भी हमारे दिल में जगह बनाए हैं । यह सत्य है कि इस समय यहां किसी खास नाग जाति का पास नहीं है तथापि नाग या चश्में को लोग अब भी पवित्र मानते हैं । आज भी नाग या च में की मछली यहां के मुसलमान तक भी खाने से परहेज़ करते हैं । इस जन-जाति का हम आज भी इतना आदर-सत्कार करते हैं कि कश्मीरी विवाहित हिन्दू स्त्रियाँ अपना सुहाग 'डेजहोर' (सर्पनुमा सोने का बना आकार) कानों में बांध कर मानती है और यहां तक कि कई महिलाएँ ऐसे भी देखने को मिलती है जिनके शिर का पहनावा 'तरॅगुं'

(सर्पाकार रूप में टोपी) होता है । यहाँ के दूर-दराज़ गांव में कुछ मुसलमान महिलाएँ ऐसी भी देखने को मिलती हैं जो कोबरा-नुमा शक्ल की एक खास टोपी पहनती हैं जिसको कश्मीरी में 'कसाबुं' कहते हैं । यहाँ कहने का तात्पर्य है कि किसी मत के सिद्धान्तों पर किसी दूसरे मत के मानने वालों का अमल करना धर्म सौहार्द का जीवन्त प्रमाण हो सकता है । इससे एक और बात सामने आती है वह यह कि किसी मत के सिद्धान्तों पर किसी दूसरे मत के मानने वालों का अमल करना धर्म सौहार्द का जीवन्त प्रमाण हो सकता है। इससे एक और बात सामने आती है वह यह कि नाग और पिशाच जातियों के आपसी धर्म सौहार्द से ही नीलमत की रचना सामने आयी है जिसमें हम कश्मीर के पवित्र स्थानों, झीलों और त्योहारों का विवरण मिलता है । इसके साथ ही यह भी सत्य है कि भारतीय आर्य यहां धर्म विश्वास लेकर प्रति वर्ष आते थे और शीत काल शुरु होते ही वापस मैदानी क्षेत्रों की ओर प्रयाण करते थे । वे तो पूरे वर्ष तक यहाँ ठहर नहीं सकते थे । सम्भवतया यह प्रयाण नाग और पिशाचों के भयवश प्रचलित हुआ होगा किन्तु समयपरिवर्तन के साथ-साथ ये यहाँ स्थायी तौर पर बसने लगे क्योंकि एक-दूसरे की सभ्यता का आदर करने की भावना के फलस्वरूप दोनों के मध्य मधुर सम्बन्ध स्थापित हुए। यहां एक और बात सामने आती है, वह यह कि यद्यपि इस समय नीलमत का रचनाकाल एवं रचनाकार वाद-विवाद का विषय बन गया है तथापि कुछ सूत्रों के आधार पर यह मानना पड़ता है कि यह मत उस समय नाग और पिशाच के परस्पर धार्मिक सौहार्द से ही अस्तित्व में आया है और इस समय इस पर प्रकाश ड़ालना मुश्किल है क्योंकि विद्वानों की इस पर अलग-अलग राय है । फिर भी हम यही कह सकते हैं कि नीलमत पुराण ने नाग और पिशाच के आपसी धर्म-सौहार्द में अपना अनुपम योगदान प्रदान किया है । यहाँ तक कि इसमें वर्णित सौहार्द की भावना आज भी लोगों को अपने प्रभाव में लिए हुए है । हम इस तरह भी कह सकते हैं कि उस समय नाग और पिशाचों के आपसकी मेल जोल से कश्मीर में एक नया धर्म-दर्शन सामने आया जिसने यहां के जन-जीवन में अति महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका अदा की और कश्मीरियों को अन्य जातियों से हट कर अपनी एक विशेष पहचान से सारे भारत में सम्मानित किया ।

कश्मीर में आर्यों की संस्कृति और उसके बाद के सांस्कृतिक लेन-देन के फलस्वरूप यहां की जनता विभिन्न देवी-देवताओं को अपना आराध्य मानने लगी । हवा, सूर्य, अग्नि, उषा, नभ, इन्द्र, यम आदि को लोग देवता मानकर इनको पूरी श्रद्धा के साथ पूजने लगे, जिसके कारण लोग वर्गो और समुदायों में बटने लगे । इससे इनके बीच ईर्ष्या और नफ़रत की दीवार खड़ी हो गयी । सभी अपने-अपने देवता को प्राथमिकता देकर एक दूसरे से लड़ने के लिए उतारू हो गए । परन्तु वेदान्त ने भी कश्मीर में दार्शनिक प्रकाश फैलाया - कि हर इन्सान भगवान के नूर की एक किरण है और हर इन्सान में पांच चीज़ों का होना ज़रूरी है जो इस प्रकार हैं - अन्नम अथवा जीवन, परनम् अथवा मन, मनस अथवा बुद्धि, विजन्नम अथवा आत्मिक शान्ति और आनन्दम् अथवा खुशी । किन्तु इसके बावजूद यहाँ ऊंच-नीच की दुर्भावना पूरी तरह मिट न पाई और तब इस तरह की प्रदूषित हवा को साफ करने के लिए भारत के कुछ विशेष स्थानों की तरह कश्मीर के लोगों ने बौद्ध-धर्म को अपना लिया और इस तरह से धार्मिक सहिष्णुता का एक और उदाहरण देकर इस महान भावना के उन्नयन में अपना अनुपम योगदान प्रदान किया । यही कारण है कि एक समय वह भी आया जब कश्मीर बौद्ध-दर्शन का एक प्रमुख केन्द्र बन गया । इतिहास साक्षी है कि बौद्ध-धर्म के प्रचार-प्रसार से ही कश्मीर (भारत), चीन और तिब्बत एक-दूसरे के निकट आने लगे । वस्तुतः कश्मीर के बौद्ध-दार्शनिकों ने ही तिब्बत और चीन में बौद्ध-धर्म का प्रचार-प्रसार किया जिसका यहां अब भी और खास कर तिब्बत में पालन किया जाता है । महाराजा अशोक का कश्मीर आगमन एक महत्वपूर्ण ऐतिहासिक घटना है । विद्वानों के अनुसार ईसा से पहले ही महाराजा सुरेन्द्र ने यहां आकर बौद्ध विहार और मठ बनाए थे और महाराजा अशोक के समय बौद्ध धर्म सुदृढता से स्थापित हुआ । अशोक ने तीसरा बौद्ध सम्मेलन पाटलीपुत्र में और चौथा बौद्ध सम्मेलन कश्मीर में बुलाया जिसमें एक तिब्बती लेखक के अनुसार ९५०० विद्वानों ने भाग लिया था । इसमें ५०० ब्राह्मण, १५०० अरहट और ५०० बौद्धिस्तु भी शामिल थे जो भारत, चीन और तिब्बत से सम्बन्ध रखते थे । कहा जाता है कि इसमें बौद्ध-धर्म की उस शाखा पर विचार किया गया जो वेदान्त और भागवत् के बहुत निकट है। यह शाखा भगवान के अस्तित्व की कायल है । यह शाखा देवी-देवताओं को मानती है और मन्दिरों में पूजा पाठ करने पर ज़ोर देती है । इस शाखा के मतावलम्बी तथागत को देवता मानते

हैं । इसके मानने वाले मूर्ति पूजा पर विश्वास करते हैं और उनके अनुसार मुक्ति या निर्वाण प्राप्त करने का एकमात्र तरीका है अपनी इच्छाओं पर काबू पाना । विद्वानों के अनुसार इस बौद्ध सम्मेलन की सारी कार्यवाही उस समय लिखित रूप में ताम्र पटों पर अंकित कर दी गई थी जो यहां के एक गांव कुण्ड़लवन में कहीं भूमि के नीचे सुरक्षित है । बौद्ध-धर्म के इन नियमों को कश्मीरी जन मानस से लेकर चीनी पर्यटक ह्वेनसांग के यहां आने तक बराबर अपने जीवन में कार्यान्वित करते रहे किन्तु इसके साथ-साथ यहां और भी कई धर्म या दर्शन प्रकाश पुंज बनकर परम तत्व का पथ दिखाते रहे । इसमें सांख्य, योग, शक्ति, शाक्त और शैव-दर्शन उल्लेखनीय है । यह दूसरी बात है कि महाराजा कन्ष्कि के बाद यहां बौद्धों और ब्राह्मणों के बीच में भयंकर खाई पैदा हो गयी किन्तु इन धर्म-दर्शनों से यहां की जनता में धर्म सौहार्द और धर्म सम्भाव में कोई आंच नहीं आ पाई और इनके मानने वाले अथवा परिपालक एक-दूसरे पर किसी भी तरह या किसी भी उद्देश्य से टक्कर नहीं लेते हैं । कारण यह है कि सभी धर्मो का उद्देश्य इन्सान को सांसारिक बन्धनों से मुक्ति के रास्ते पर अग्रसर करवाना है। इसके अतिरिक्त इनका सम्बन्ध वेद और भागवत् से है । यद्यपि यहां की जनता ने इन धर्मो का परिपालन धीरे धीरे किया तथापि इससे बौद्ध धर्म या दर्शन की मशाल यहां बुझने-सी लगी ओर शैव-धर्म को यहां के लोग पूरी आज़ादी के साथ अपनाने लगे । हां, यह वह शैव-धर्म या मत नहीं है जिसकी मशाल आज भी दक्षिण भारत में जलती है बल्कि यहां जिस शैव मत का आविर्भाव हुआ वह असली शैवमत से भिन्न है और वह कश्मीरी शैव-दर्शन कहलाता है । मेरे अनुसार उस समय यह दर्शन इसलिए अस्तित्व में आया होगा क्योंकि यहां का जन-जीवन विभिन्न धर्म-गुत्थियों को सुलझाने में असमर्थ रहा था । विभिन्न धर्मो का आदर-सत्कार करने पर भी यह समझा नहीं पाते कि कौन सा धर्म अच्छा है और कौन सा बुरा । इसलिए एक ऐसा मत अस्तित्व में आया जिसमें सब धर्मो का निचोड़ था और यही कारण है कि कश्मीरी शैव-दर्शन वेदान्त, बौद्ध, सांक्ष्य, शक्ति, वैष्णवी और शैवी सिद्धान्तों को एक सुन्दर गुलदस्ते के रूप में प्रस्तुत करता है । इसमें योग भी है और नीलमत के कुछ उसूल भी शामिल हैं ।

कश्मीरी शैव-दर्शन की नींव तीन स्तंभों पर खड़ी है ये तीन स्तंभ हैं - नर, शक्ति और शिव । दूसरी बातों में इनका नाम ऐसा भी हो सकता है पित, पाशि, और पशु अथवा शिव, शक्ति और अणु या पर, अपर और अपर पर । चूँकि यह दर्शन तीन स्तंभों पर आधारित है, इसलिए इसको त्रिका या तीन गुणों वाला दर्शन कहा जाने लगा । इनके अन्तर्गत शिव या परमशिव ही जीवन का सत्य है । यही सत्य सबका आधार है। विश्व में सब कुछ इसी पर निर्भर करता है । शिव ही सत्य है और यह सत्य शक्ति मात्र है । इस सत्य की परहचान सबको होनी चाहिए। यही सत्य आदि है और यही अन्त । शिव का कोई आकार नहीं। वह निराकार है । वह समय और स्थान के बन्घन से आज़ाद है । वह एक ऐसा सत्य है जो हमेशा सत्य था और सत्य रहेगा। शिव पूर्ण है और अन्तहीन है । वस्तुत: यह दो शक्तियों का निचोड़ है और इनको नर और स्त्री कहा गया है । शिव की शक्ति वह रूह या आत्मा है जिसको नर समझना चाहिए और स्त्री या शक्ति तब तक अपूर्ण है जब तक न उसके साथ नर शामिल हो और इसी प्रकार शिव तब तक शव है जब तक उसके साथ स्त्री या शक्ति शामिल न हो । इन्हीं से यह प्रकृति बनी है। कश्मीरी हिन्दुओं का बहुमत अभी भी शैव-दर्शन पर निष्ठा रखता है ।

किन्तु समय की निर्झरी हमेशा अपना अगला रास्ता ढूँढती हुई आगे बढ़ती रहती है। ईरान से सूफियों- सन्तों या धर्म-प्रचारकों ने यहा प्रवेश किया । इनके धर्म-प्रचार में उस समय कश्मीरियों को अपने धर्म की कई बातों का गम्भीर अहसास होने लगा । फलस्वरूप सूफियों की धर्म विचार-धारा का प्रभाव कश्मीरियों पर काफ़ी हद तक पड़ा । इसका प्रमुख कारण यह है कि दोनों इस सांसार को भ्रम या माया मानते हैं । दोनों का कहना है कि जीवन का सार सिर्फ परमतत्व है या हम इस तरह कह दें कि उस समय दोनों समुदायों ने महसूस किया कि दोनों की धर्म विचार-धारा में ऐसी समान बातें विद्यमान हैं जो त्रिक-दर्शन, योग और वेदान्त के उसूलों से मिलती जुलती हैं । उदाहरण स्वरूप कुछ एक का वर्णन नीचे किया जाता है -

१- भगवान एक है । उसकी जात सब से ऊँची और निराली है । वही मुनष्य के अस्तित्व का स्रोत है। उसकी हस्ती ही मात्र वह हस्ती है जो दुनिया की सबसे बड़ी हस्तियों में से एक है ।

२- वेदान्त के ब्रह्मा या शिव या हमारे त्रिक्-दर्शन के शिव का भी परमतत्व या उसी बड़ी हस्ती से साम्य है ।

३- जीवन-दान भगवान की इच्छा पर होता है और

इसका अस्तित्व तब तक कायम है जब तक यह सृष्टि है ।

४- सूफियों के अनलहक (मैं ही सत्य हूँ) का भी वह अर्थ है जो शैव-दर्शन में 'शिवोहम्' (मैं शिव हूँ) का है। वस्तुत: यह वही शिवोहम् है जिसका कश्मीरी में विकृत रूप 'सोहम' है ।

५- मनुष्य का जीवन उसी का वरदान है । उसके अन्दर वही गुण विद्यमान है जो असली स्रोत या सत्य में है।

भले ही इस समय कश्मीरियों के जन-जीवन के प्रवाह में कई नदियां बहती हैं किन्तु सबों के आपसी धर्म-सौहार्द की भावना में उपरोक्त धार्मिक उसूल किसी-न-किसी रूप में रच-पच गए हैं। यही कारण है कि शताब्दियों से यहां के लोगों का जीवन प्रवाह प्राय: दो समान नदियों जैसा रहा है । गत छ: सौ वर्षों से यहां का जन-जीवन इस्लाम तथा हिन्दुओं की समान विचार-धारा की बहती हुई नदियों की तरह प्रवाहित है । दोनों एक दूसरे के धर्म का सम्मान करते हैं । इतिहास साक्षी है कि यहां कई मुसलमान राजाओं की हिन्दुओं की रीति के अनुसार ताजपोशी हुई है । तत्पश्चात् ये सिंहासन पर आसीन हुए । दोनों समुदाय अलग-अलग धर्म होते हुए भी साधारण जीवन व्यतीत करते हैं । दोनों का दैनिक आहार साग-भात है, ठीक उसी तरह जिस तरह क मीर के बाहर के प्रदेशों में लोग दाल-रोटी खाते हैं । दोनों के रीति-रिवाज लगभग एक समान हैं । हिन्दुओं का मंगलाचरण, देवी-देवताओं की वन्दना और वैदिक मंत्रों का पाठ तथा मुसलमानों की अज़ान, निमाज़ और अन्य अनेक मुस्लिम कृत्यों की भावना तो मात्र एक ईश्वर में निहित है । यहां धर्म-सौहार्द का आदर्श प्रमाण तो यह है जहां एक छोर पर मन्दिर है तो इसके दूसरे छोर पर मस्जिद भी मिलती है । हिन्दुओं के साथ-साथ मलिक वंश के मुसलमान परिवार भी अमरनाथ की कष्टसाध्य यात्रा करके अपनी मनोकामना पूरी करते हैं । कोई भी मुसलमान 'तुलामुला' या क्षीरभवानी की राह जाने से पहले मांस नहीं खाएगा । इसी तरह हिन्दू मुसलमानों की कई ज़ियारतों में भाग लेकर अपने मन की मुराद पाते हैं । बहुत से मुसलमान परिवारों की जात हिन्दुओं की है जैसे कोकरू, किचलू, कोल, दर, आदि। दोनों समुदायों में पीर-फकीर, मस्ताने एवं सन्त हुए हैं किन्तु आश्चर्य यह है कि दोनों ने अपने श्रद्धालुओं को 'सोहम्' या 'अनलहक' का ही उपदेश दिया । इस तरह हम देखते हैं कि कश्मीरी की उत्पत्ति होने से आज तक यहां जिन धर्मों का विकास हुआ, भले ही उनके कारण कुछ भी रहे हों, किन्तु कश्मीरियों के जन-जीवन में धर्म-साहार्द या भाईचारे और सभी धर्मों को समान आदर देने की भावना हर समय उजागर होती हुई देखी गई है और इसके लिए यहां के लोगों ने कभी संकीर्ण दृष्टिकोण नहीं अपनाया। यदि ऐसा न हुआ होता तो कश्मीर के बरसों पुराने इतिहास की कड़ियां न जुड पायी होती और कश्मीरियों के जन-जीवन का जो प्रवाह हमें आजकल देखने को मिलता है, वह हम कभी देख न पाते ।

आनन्दं आनन्द-करं प्रसन्नं
ज्ञान-स्वरूपं निज-बोध-युक्तम् ।
योगीन्द्रं ईड्यं भव-रोग-वैद्यं
श्रीसद् गुरुं नित्यं अहं नमामि ।।

" I regularly bow to the Guru who is bliss incarnate and (so) bestows bliss (on His disciples); and Who is (ever) joyous, knowledge incarnate, self-realised, the greatest of the yogis, worthy of being worshipped and a physician to those suffering from the disease of the World" (i.e., He Who can show the way to liberation).

- Guru Geeta

जीवनमुक्त - लल्लेश्वरी

- प्रो० कृष्णलाल भल्ला

श्री अरविन्द के अनुसार - " यही वह सत्य है जिसे उपनिषदें 'ब्रह्म' कहती हैं और जो सब का मूल तत्व है जहाँ से सभी चीज़ें पैदा होती, जिस में निवास करती हैं और अन्त में जिसके अन्दर लौट जाती हैं, यही भगवान है जिसके साथ एकत्व प्राप्त करना योग का चरम उद्देश्य है - यही वह मिलन है जो ज्ञान, धर्म और आनन्द के लिय होता है ।"

तत्ववेता लल्लेश्वरी कश्मीर की एक प्रख्यात कवि सन्त हुई हैं । उनको आमतौर पर लल्ला के नाम से याद किया जाता है । लल्ला शब्द का मूल ललिता है । उनके जीवन के बारे में कोई लिखित ग्रन्थ नहीं लेकिन यह धारणा है कि उनका जन्म पामपुर के निकट सेमपुर में चौदहवी शताब्दी में हुआ । उनका विवाह एक ब्राह्मण लड़के से हुआ । सास ने उन्हें बहुत कष्ट दिये जिस के परिणाम स्वरूप उन्होंने विवाह के थोड़े समय बाद गृहस्थ जीवन का परित्याग कर दिया ।

लल्ला जी प्रातः काल उठकर योगसाधना करती थीं और परमात्मा की खोज में कई स्थानों पर भ्रमण करती रहीं । उन्होंने घर घर प्रेम और ज्ञान का सन्देश पहुँचाया । पार्थिव शरीर त्यागने के बाद कहीं उनका स्मारक नहीं बना । हिन्दू, मुसलमान सभी उनका आदर करते थे ।

उनके विचार ठीक प्रकार समझने के लिए कश्मीर के शैव-सिद्धान्त की जानकारी ज़रूरी है । िव का निराकार शुद्ध चैतन्य रूप है और वहीं शिव अपनी शक्ति द्वारा सृष्टि की रचना करते हैं । शैव-दर्शन में जगत को मिथ्या नहीं बताया गया है । वसुगुप्त, अभिनवगुप्त जैसे शैवाचार्यो ने सिद्धि प्राप्त करन के लिए भक्ति पर बल दिया ।

लल्ला जी शैव-दर्शन से अच्छी प्रकार परिचित थीं । कहा जाता है सिद्ध श्रीकंठ महाराज ने उन्हें शिक्षा दी थी । इसी शैव-दर्शन के अनुरूप उनका जीवन था । उन्होंने कश्मीरी भाषा में कई गीतों की रचना की जिन्हें 'वाक' कहते हैं । इन वाकों में मार्मिक बातों का उल्लेख है । कई गीतों में उनकी अपनी साधना और शिव से मिलने की तीव्र इच्छा का ज़िक्र मिलता है । कश्मीर में सभी लोग बड़े प्रेम से वाकों को गाते हैं और उनसे प्रेरणा ग्रहण करते हैं । उनका एक वाक इस तरह है -

आमि पन् सद्‌रस नावि छस लमान,
कति बोज़ि दय म्योन म्यति दियि तार,
आम्यन टाक्यन पोनि ज़न शमान,
जुव छुम ब्रमान गर् गछ़हा ।

इसका अर्थ यह है - "मैं समुद्र में अपनी नौका चला रही हूँ और मेरे हाथ में एक कच्ची रस्सी है । क्या भगवान मेरी प्रार्थना सुनेंगे और मुझे भवसागर से पार करेंगें ? जैसे कच्चे घड़े में पानी नही ठहरता उसी प्रकार मेरे प्रयास व्यर्थ सिद्ध हो रहे हैं । अपने घर पहुँचने की क्या मैं आ ा रख सकती हूँ ?"

उनका मत है कि आत्म-अनुभूति के लिए तीव्र वैराग्य की ज़रूरत है । काम, क्रोध आदि विकारों को त्यागने पर ही दिव्य दर्शन हो सकते हैं । हमें शिव को अपने अन्दर ढूँढना है । यह शरीर ही शिव का मन्दिर है । हमें किसी और जगह प्रभु की तलाश करने की आव यकता नहीं । उनके विचार में केवल पुस्तकें पढ़ने से ज्ञान की प्राप्ति नहीं हो सकती । गुरु कृपा आव यक है । सुखमणि साहिब के अनुसार -

गुरु का दर्शन फल देत है, मन को पाक बनाता है ।
छू कर उस के चरणों को, सब चाल चलन धुल जाता है ।

लल्ला जी का मानना था - "इसी जीवन में आत्म-साक्षात्कार हो सकता है यदि द्वैत भाव मिट जाए।" आज के युग में जब मानव द्वेष की अग्नि में जल रहा है उनकी शिक्षा पर चलने से ही शान्ति मिल सकती है।

प्रद्युम्नपीठ पर विराजनी श्री चक्र रूपा शारिका देवी

- डॉ० बदरीनाथ कल्ला

नौम्यहं शारिका देवीं शारिका रूप धारिणीम्
प्रद्युम्नपीठमध्यस्थां बकासुरविनाशिनीम् ।।

प्रद्युम्नपीठ के मध्य में स्थित, बकासुर को मारने वाली तथा शारिका (मैना) का रूप धारण करने वाली शारिका देवी को में प्रणाम करता हूँ ।

कश्मीर हज़ारों वर्षों से शिवधामों के अतिरिक्त प्रतिष्ठित शाक्तपीठों का प्रमुख केन्द्र रहा है । यहां के प्रागैतिहासिक शाक्तपीठ इस तथ्य की पुष्टि करते हैं । इन शाक्त पीठों में से तीन पीठ अत्यन्त प्रसिद्ध हैं - श्रीनगर का शारिका पीठ या सिद्धिपीठ, तुलमुल्ला का राज्ञादेवी (वर्तमान खीर भवानी) का पीठ तथा खिव का ज्वालादेवी पीठ । इनका उत्सव विशेष तिथियों पर मनाया जाता है । शारिका जी का पर्व आषाढ़ शुक्लपक्ष नवमी को, राज्ञादेवी का ज्येष्ठ शुक्ल अष्टमी को तथा ज्वालादेवी का आषाढ़ शुक्ल चतुर्दशी को ।

अपने कुलाचार तथा रीति के अनुसार कश्मीर में प्रत्येक घर की एक कुलदेवी होती है । उसकी विशेष उपासना उस घर में की जाती है । इन कुलदेवियों में से अधिक लोकप्रिय श्री शारिका, श्री महाराज्ञी तथा श्री ज्वालामुखी हैं। श्री त्रिपुरा, श्री शैलपुत्री, श्री काली, श्री बाला, श्री त्रिपुर सुन्दरी, श्री भद्रकाली तथा श्री शारदा आदि भी काफी प्रसिद्ध हैं । कश्मीर में कहीं कहीं जलरूप में वितस्ता, प्रयागराज, संगमों तथा नागों (चश्मों) की, शिलारूप में देवियों और वृक्षों के रूप में भैरवों की पूजा होती है । विभिन्न माहात्म्यों के अनुसार इन देवियों की पूजा से साधक को प्रत्येक प्रकार की सिद्धि मिल सकती है । इतिहास के अध्ययन से यह मालूम होता है कि कश्मीर के लोग प्राचीन काल से शक्ति के उपासक रहे हैं । शैव शिव को विशिष्टता देते हैं तथाा शाक्त शक्ति को । दोनों का लक्ष्य एक है । शैव दर्शन के प्रसिद्ध आचार्यों सोमानन्द, उत्पलदेव तथा अभिनवगुप्त के अनुसार यह सारा विश्व शिव तथा शक्ति के संयोग से बना हुआ है । शिव तथा शक्ति एक दूसरे से अलग थलग उसी प्रकार नहीं हैं जिस प्रकार चांद से चादनी । शिव ज्ञान रूप है शक्ति क्रिया रूप है । ज्ञान तथा क्रिया का सम्बन्ध अटूट है ।

'प्रत्यभिज्ञा दर्शन' के अनुसार शिव-शक्ति से उत्पन्न यह विश्व परमशिव का बाह्य-रूप है जो शिव की भन्ति ही सत्य, अनादि तथा अनन्त है । दर्पण में जैसे मुख प्रतिबिम्बित होता है उसी प्रकार इस शिव-रूप दर्पण में संसार का रूप प्रतिबिम्बित है जो शिव की सत्यता के साथ स्वयं भी सत्य है ।

हमारी देवियां - लक्ष्मी, दुर्गा, शारिका तथा सरस्वती आदि शक्ति की प्रतीक हैं । इनकी साधना से साधक भौतिक सिद्धि के साथ साथ आध्यात्मिक क्षेत्र में भी अलौकिक सिद्धि पा सकता है । वस्तुत: कश्मीर के साधकों को यहां ही परमशिव का अर्थात् सत्य (ultimate truth) का साक्षात्कार हुआ था । इसी साक्षात्कार तथा अनुभव के कारण उन्होंने ऐसा दर्शन संसार को दिया जो शैव-दर्शन, प्रत्यभिज्ञा-दर्शन अथवा त्रिक-दर्शन के नाम से विख्यात है ।

जनश्रुति के अनुसार आदि गुरु शंकराचार्य को शाक्त-पीठ में आकर शक्ति के सामने झुकना पड़ा । फलत: उन्होंने तन्त्र शास्त्र पर आधारित 'सौन्दर्य लहरी' की रचना कश्मीर में की तथा उसके प्रथम लोक में शक्ति की आराधना की । बाद में उन्हें देवी का भी साक्षात्कार हुआ । इस तरह 'शाक्त-पीठ' अथवा 'सिद्धि-पीठ' की प्रसिद्धि सारे भारतवर्ष में फैल गई । इसी सिद्धि ने समय समय पर मध्ययुग में विधर्मियों यानी सुल्तानों को भी आश्चर्य चकित कर दिया था । कश्मीर के परम शाक्त श्रीभट्ट की सिद्धि से ही ज़ैनुल्लाब्दीन बड़शाह असाध्य रोग से बच गया ।

कश्मीर के तीर्थों तथा पीठों के बारे में शुक कृत 'राजतरंगिणी ' में इस तरह उल्लेख है :-

चत्वारिंशदथापि पंच गिरिशाः षष्टिश्च चक्रायुधाः
ब्रह्माणस्त्रय इत्यनादिनिधनाः द्वाविंशतिः शक्तयः ।
नीलादीनि शतानि सप्तफणिनां तीर्थौकसां कोटयो
विख्याताश्च चतुर्दशोत्तमतराः काश्मीर भूमण्डले ।।

कश्मीर मंडल में ४५ शिवधाम, ६० विष्णुधाम, ३ ब्रह्म के स्थान तथा २२ शाक्तपीठ, नील आदि ७०० नाग तथा करोड़ों ही तीर्थ विद्यमान हैं । परन्तु इनमें १४ ही तीर्थ श्रेष्ठ हैं । मध्ययुगीन इतिहासकारों - जोनराज तथा श्रीवर

आदि के सुल्तानों की धर्मान्धता, संकीर्णता तथा असहिष्णुता के कारण कश्मीरी ब्राह्मणों को अमानवीय यातनायें सहन करनी पड़ीं । उनकी निर्मम हत्याएँ की गईं । ज़बर्दस्ती से उन्हें धर्म-परिवर्तन के लिए विवश किया गया। उनके अमानवीय व्यवहार को देखकर कश्मीर के तीर्थवासी ब्राह्मणों ने अपनी प्राचीन संस्कृति की रक्षा के लिए तथा तीर्थों की पवित्रता को स्थिर रखने के लिए माहात्म्यों की रचना की । ये माहात्म्य संख्या में ५१ हैं । इन माहात्म्यों में ' शारिका माहात्म्य' भी है जिसके छ: पटल हैं । इसकी पाण्डुलिपि मेरे पास सुरक्षित है ।

सारा माहात्म्य साहित्य भैरवी तथा भैरव के संवाद से प्रारम्भ होता है । इस माहात्म्य में भी भैरव भैरवी की शंकाओं का समाधान करता है । इसमें वर्णित कथा इस प्रकार है - एक बार दुर्गा देवी ने शारिका का रूप (मैना का रूप) धारण कर लिया था । सुमेरू पहाड़ से देवी शैल का टुकड़ा अपनी चोंच में दबाकर उठा लायी । वर्तमान पर्वत के नीचे बक नामक दानव ने एक रन्ध्र (सुरंग) बनाया था जिसमें वह दैत्य गणों के साथ रहता था । देवी दानवों के द्वार को बन्द करना चाहती थी । दानव गण नरक निवासी थे। इस स्थान पर नरक के द्वार का मार्ग था । उसी द्वार पर देवी ने शैल रख दिया। दानवों का उस द्वार से निकलना बन्द हो गया । परिणामस्वरूप वे दैत्य तलातल में नष्ट हो गए । बाद में देवी स्वयं इस पहाड़ पर अपनी विभूतियों के समेत निवास करने लगी । कालान्तर में देवी के रहने के कारण यह पर्वत 'शारिका पर्वत' के नाम से प्रसिद्ध हुआ । शारिका को कश्मीरी भाषा में ' हाऽर' कहते हैं । भारतीय भाषाओं - हिन्दी, उर्दू, पंजाबी, तथा डोगरी आदि भाषाओं - में यह 'हारी पर्वत' के नाम से जाना जाता है । सोमदेव की कृति 'कथा सरित सागर' में भी इसका समुल्लेख है ।

देवी का स्थान उत्तर-पश्चिम शैल पर है । यहां उनकी पूजा प्राचीनकाल से चली आ रही है । 'शारिका माहात्म्य' के अनुसार इस पर्वत का दूसरा नाम 'प्रद्युम्नपीठ' भी है । माहात्म्यकार ने 'प्रद्युम्नपीठ' की व्युत्पत्ति (Etymology) इस प्रकार की है :-

प्रकर्षेण द्युतिं यति नरोऽत्र विधिवद्व्रतः ।
तस्मात्प्रोक्तं तंत्रज्ञै: पीठं प्रद्युम्नसंज्ञकम् ।।

यहां विधिपूर्वक पूजा में लगा हुआ मनुष्य दिव्य ज्ञान प्राप्त करता है । इसलिए तंत्र शास्त्र के विद्वानों ने इसे 'प्रद्युम्नपीठ' की संज्ञा दी है । माहात्म्य के अनुसार श्रीविद्या के जप से युक्त जो मनुष्य यहां यंत्र की पूजा करता है वह अवश्य सिद्धि प्राप्त कर सकता है । इससे स्पष्ट होता है कि कश्मीर में तांत्रिक विधान का भी प्रचलन था । आगम ग्रन्थ - अर्थात् स्वच्छंद तंत्र, गंधर्व तंत्र, नेत्रतंत्र, मालिनी विजयतंत्र, आदि इसके प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण हैं जो इस समय भी उपलब्ध हैं ।

प्रद्युम्नपीठ का वर्णन इतिहासकार कल्हण ने 'राजतरंगिनी' में किया है । 'कथा सरित्सागर' की कथा प्रद्युम्न पुत्र अनिरुद्ध एवं बाणासुर की पुत्री उषा के प्रेम से सम्बन्धित है । यह आख्यान सोमदेव ने 'हरिवंश' के पुराण के आधार पर लिखा है । कल्हण ने यहां पर एक प्रसिद्ध पाशुपतव्रती लोगों के मठ का भी वर्णन किया है । उसका निर्माण महाराजा रणादित्य के द्वारा हुआ था ।

इसके अतिरिक्त कल्हण के समकालीन बिल्हण ने अपने महाकाव्य 'विक्रमाङ्कदेवचरितम् ' में जोनराज तथा श्रीवर ने अपनी रचनाओं में प्रद्युम्नपीठ, प्रद्युम्नगिरिः, प्रद्युम्न शिखर आदि नामों से इसका वर्णन किया है। इस पहाड़ पर गणेश, चक्रेश्वरी तथा शारिकादेवी का मन्दिर है । पर्वत के दक्षिण कोण पर एक चट्टान है वह भीमस्वामी गणेश की मूर्ति कही जाती है । सारी चट्टान सिन्दूर से रंगी हुई है । भीमस्वामी गणेश का वर्णन 'कश्मीर तीर्थ संग्रह' में भी मिलता है । पहाड़ के ढाल पर शारिका देवी का तीर्थस्थन है । शारिकादेवी की यहां कोई गढी मूर्ति नहीं है । सिन्दूर से रंगा हुआ एक शिला खण्ड है उस पर श्रीचक्र अंकित है । यह शिला खंड़ सिन्दूर से इतना ढक गया है कि रेखाएं साफ़ दिखाई नहीं देती हैं । इस विषय में वहां के पुरोहितों का कथन है कि कभी कभी श्रीचक्र की रेखायें स्वत: उभड़ आती हैं । इस शिला-खण्ड का रूप ध्यान से देखने पर शारिका पंखी के आकार के समान लगता है । इससे इसका नामकरण सार्थक होता है ।

इस चक्रेश्वर पर्वत के ऊपर अफगान गवर्नर अतामोहमद खां (1808-10 ई०) ने किल्ला बनवाया था। किल्ले में छोटा मन्दिर है जिसमें शारिका की काली शिला मूर्ति है । इस मूर्त्ति की प्रतिष्ठा ड़ोगरा शासनकाल में हुई थी । इस मन्दिर के साथ ही एक छोटे गुरुद्वारे में सिक्खों का गुरु ग्रन्थ साहिब है ।

इस पहाड़ की अधित्यका में राजा प्रवरसेन ने उत्तर तथा पूर्व की ओर अपनी राजधानी 'प्रवरपुर' के नाम से बसाई थी जिसका प्रमाण प्रवरेश्वर मन्दिर के द्वार की

खड़ी दीवार है । इस पर्वत के चोरों ओर नागर नगर का प्राचीर मुगल सम्राट् अकबर ने 1597 ई० में बनवाया था । शारिका पर्वत के मूल में पुराने ज़माने में एक नगर बसाया गया था जिसे आजकल 'देवी आंगण' कहते हैं ।

मध्ययुग में अर्थात् मुसलमानों के शासनकाल में इस पर्वत की पूर्वीय ढाल पर मुकद्दम साहिब तथा आखून मुल्लाशाह की ज़ियारतें बनाई गई थीं जो इस समय भी विद्यमान हैं । उन स्थानों पर हिन्दुओं के शासनकाल में मन्दिर था जिसकी सामग्री यवनों ने ज़ियारतों के निर्माण में लगायी थी ।

हारी पर्वत की लोकप्रियता के कारण चीनी यात्री ह्वेनसांग ने सातवीं शती में इस पर्वत का उल्लेख 'अपने यात्रा विवरण' में किया है । जहांगीर की 'तुज़के जहांगीरी' में भी इसका वर्णन मिलता है । इस प्रकार स्वदेशी तथा विदेशी विद्वानों ने इसकी गरिमा पर प्रकाश डाल दिया है ।

शाक्तमत का मुख्य-पीठ होने के कारण यहां के माहात्म्यकारों का योगदान शक्ति की प्रतीकभूता देवियों के माहात्म्य लिखने में महत्वपूर्ण रहा है । माहात्म्यों की श्रृंखला में वितस्ता माहात्म्य, शारदा माहात्म्य, वेतगंगा माहात्म्य, राज्ञी माहात्म्य, हरमुकुट गंगा माहात्म्य एवं शारिका माहात्म्य बहुत ही प्रसिद्ध हैं। यहां के लोगों पर शाक्तमत का प्रभाव इतना गहरा पड़ा था कि लोग ठाकुर-द्वारों में यंत्रों की पूजा करते थे । इस समय भी लोग शाक्तमत के प्रभाव के कारण भवानीसहस्रनाम तथा पन्चस्तवी आदि का पाठ करते हैं और पूजा के समय 'नैवेद्यमन्त्र' में शारिका देवी के समेत अन्य देवियों - शारदा, यमुना, गंगा, सरस्तवी आदि का नाम लेते हैं। इस तरह यहां के शाक्तों ने समन्वयवाद की संस्कृति को विकसित किया ।

कश्मीर में लोग विभिन्न पर्वो पर - गंगाष्टमी (गंग अठम),शारदा अष्टमी, वितस्ता त्रयोदशी (व्यथुँ त्रुवाह) गौरी तृतीया, नवदुर्गा पूजा तथा त्रिपुरा चतुर्थी आदि देवियों के व्रत रख कर पूजा पाठ भी करते हैं । यहां के आचार्यो ने समय समय पर शारिका देवी के विषय में स्तव तथा स्तोत्र आदि लिखे । यहां पर यह कहना असंगत न होगा कि आदि गुरु शंकराचार्य ने 'शारिकाष्टक' की रचना कश्मीर में ही की । इसकी शारदा पाण्डुलिपि मेरे पास है । बाद में पंडित साहिब राम ने 'शारिका स्तव' लिखा ।

प्रत्येक देवी की शास्त्रों के अनुसार अलग अलग पहचान है । शारिका देवी की भी अलग पहचान है । इनकी अठारह भुजाएं हैं । ये भुजायें पांच कर्मेन्दियों, पांच ज्ञानेन्द्रियों, मन, बुद्धि, अहंकार, पुरुष, प्रकृति, शक्ति, शिव तथा परमशिव की प्रतीक रूप हैं । इन प्रतीकात्मक भुजाओं की उपासना से साधक पराशक्ति एवं परमशिव के अनुग्रह का पात्र बन सकता है ।

उक्त उदाहरणों से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि कश्मीर में शक्ति की उपासना के रूप में माहात्म्य, स्तोत्र तथा स्तव आदि लिखने की परम्परा प्राचीनकाल से चलती आ रही है। वस्तुत: आध्यात्मिक चेतना को स्पन्दित करने में कश्मीर के शैवाचार्यो की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण रही है ।

श्रीचक्र का संक्षिप्त वर्णन

शिव शक्ति का नवचक्रात्मक, रेखात्मक शरीर ही श्रीचक्र है। तांत्रिक शक्तिपूजा एवं उपासना का आधार श्रीचक्र है। इसी स्वयंभू श्रीचक्र के कारण काश्मीर शाक्तपीठों में प्रधान पीठ माना जाता है। यह स्वयंभू श्रीचक्र श्रीनगर के मध्य प्रद्युम्नपर्वत के शिखर पर है जिसे भक्तजन श्रीराजराजेश्वरी, चक्रेश्वरी एवं श्री शारिका के नाम से पुकारते हैं। आश्चर्यजनक सिद्धियों के कारण इस स्थान को सिद्धिपीठ प्रद्युम्नपीठ अथवा श्रीपीठ भी कहते हैं।

श्रीचक्र के नौ चक्रों के नाम :-

चक्रनाम	आकार
१- सर्वानन्दमय चक्र	केन्द्रस्थ तालु बिन्द ।
२- सर्वार्थ सिद्धिप्रद चक्र	पीले रंग का त्रिकोण ।
३- सर्वरोगहर चक्र	काले रंग का अ टकोण।
४- सर्वरक्षाकर चक्र	हरे रंग के दस त्रिकोण ।
५- सर्वार्थ साधक चक्र	लालरंग के दस त्रिकोण ।
६- सर्वसौभाग्यदायक चक्र	नीले रंग के १४ त्रिकोण
७- सर्वसंक्षोभन चक्र	ग़ुलाबी रंग के अ टदल कमल
८- सर्वाधापरिपूरक चक्र	नीले रंग का १६ दल पद्म
९- त्रैलौकय मोहन चक्र	व त्तत्रय त्रिरेखात्मक ।

नौ चक्रों की अधिष्ठात्री देवियां

१- सर्वानन्दमय बिन्दुचक्र की अधिष्ठात्री देवी स्वयं महात्रिपुर सुन्दरी है जो श्वेत बिन्दु स्वरूपा है ।
२- सर्वार्थ सिद्धिप्रदचक्र की त्रिपुराम्बा ।
३- सर्वरोगहर चक्र की त्रिपुरा सिद्धा ।
४- सर्वरक्षाकर चक्र की त्रिपुरा मलिनी ।
५- सर्वार्थसाधक - चक्र की त्रिपुरा श्री ।
६- सर्वसौभाग्यदायक चक्र की त्रिपुरावासिनी ।
७- सर्वसंक्षोभन चक्र की त्रिपुरा सुन्दरी ।
८- सर्वशापरिपूरक चक्र की त्रिपुरेशी ।

९- त्रैलौक्यमोहन चक्र की त्रिपुरा है ।

शैवाचार्यों के अनुसार नौ अधिष्ठात्रियों के नाम :-

१- महामहेश्वरी

२- महामहाराज्ञी

३- महामहाशक्ति

४- महामहागुप्ता

५- महामहाज्ञप्ता

६- महामहानन्दा

७- महामहास्पन्दा

८- महामहाशया

९- महामहा श्रीचक्र निवासिनी महात्रिपुर सुन्दरी है ।

इस प्रकार प्रत्येक त्रिकोण या दल की देवी है ।

शक्तिचक्र और शिवचक्रों का स्वरूप :-

ये नौ चक्र दो भागों में विभाजित किए गए हैं :-

१- शक्तिचक्र, २-शिवचक्र ।

शक्ति से सम्बन्धित चक्र शक्ति-चक्र कहलाते है । इनका स्वरूप अधोमुख त्रिकोण ∇ होता है -

शिव से सम्बन्धित चक्र शिवचक्र कहलाते हैं इनका स्वरूप ऊर्ध्व मुख त्रिकोण Δ होता है जैसे -

शक्तिचक्र पांच हैं : - १- त्रिकोण, २- अष्टकोण, ३-४ दशारद्वय, ५- चतुर्दशार ।

शिवचक्र चार हैं : - १- बिन्दु, २- अष्टदल, ३- षोडषदल, ४- चतुरस्रा

श्रीचक्र का स्वरूप

बिन्दुत्रिकोणवसुकोण दशारयुग्म
मन्वन्ननागवल संयुत-षोडशारम् ।
वृत्तत्रयं च धरणी-सवन-त्रयं च
श्रीचक्रराजमुदितं परदेवतायाः ।।

हावुन छु रावरावुन,
चावुक समर छु खाऽमी !
थावन छि छाव बापत,
बानन ति ठान वे'सिये !

To show one's treasure is to lose it; the result of impatience to pluck and show one's fruits is unripeness. Hence people cover up their utensils so that the food within may be perfectly cooked.

राज़, पर्नुने देशि, द्रामुत,
योर आमुत गिंदने ।
नचुँनस ज़न मोर आमुत,
योर आमुत गिंदने ।।

The king (Atma) has, of his own will, descended from his place of pure spirit and come here (into space, time and matter) to amuse himself. In his joy he is like a dancing peacock (displaying beauty and seeking love).

- *'MasterJi' (Zinda Kaul)*

ॐ नमो भगवते गोपीनाथय
लीला कवि सम्मेलन

तिथि : 21-9-1997

- पृथ्वीनाथ कौल 'सायल'

जगतगुरु भगवान गोपीनाथ जी की जन्म शताब्दी समारोहों के सिलसिले की एक कड़ी आज का शोभायमान लीला कवि सम्मेलन है । कार्यक्रम के अनुसार श्री गोपीनाथ जी ट्रस्ट उदयवाला, जम्मू के श्रद्धा तथा भक्ति भाव के फल स्वरूप यह कश्मीरी भाषा के भक्ति कवियों ने लीला कवि सम्मेलन में बड़े उत्साह तथा श्रद्धा से भाग लिया। आज के इस लीला कवि सम्मेलन का शीर्षक 'गुरु वन्दना' रखा गया था । यह कवि सम्मेलन उपरोक्त ट्रस्ट के आयोजन से उदयवाला, जम्मू के शान्दार लाइब्रेरी भवन में हुआ । कवि गण और श्रद्धालु भक्तिगण बड़ी संख्या में उपस्थित थे । भवन के अतिरिक्त आश्रम के अंगन में भक्तिगण एकत्रित हुए थे ।

कवि सम्मेलन का उद्घाटन भगवान जी की मूर्ति को धूप दीप जलाकर किया गया । हमारे प्रसिद्ध संस्कृत विद्वान, श्री जानकीनाथ कौल 'कमल' ने द्वीप जलाकर भगवान जी की पूजा की । श्री कमल कवि सम्मेलन के लिए सर्वसम्मति से प्रधान नियुक्त किए गए । मंच संचाल का कार्य श्री पृथ्वीनाथ कौल 'सायिल' ने सम्भाला । श्री 'सायिल' का कवि सम्मेलन के आयोजन में पूरा पूरा सहयोग रहा है । क्योंकि इस प्रकार के कवि सम्मेलनों की शुरुआत इनके ही प्रयत्न से कई वर्ष पूर्व कश्मीर घाटी में हुई थी । श्री सायिल ने ऐतिहासिक लीला कवि सम्मेलनों के आयोजन का महत्व बताते हुए कश्मीरी भाषा में लिखी गई लीला पद्धति की व्याख्या की । प्रसिद्ध भक्त कवियों श्री परमानन्द (कृष्ण भक्त), श्री कृष्णजू राज़दान (शिव भक्त), श्री महेश्वरनाथ 'महेश्वर' की प्रसिद्ध लीलाओं में से चुनी हुई पंक्तियों को भी प्रस्तुत किया । इस प्रकार कवि सम्मेलन का अच्छा खासा वातावरण तथा समां बन गया ।

सर्व प्रथम श्री निरंजननाथ 'सुमन' ने अपना भावपूर्ण कवि पाठ किया । श्रोतागण मस्त हो गए । बोल इस प्रकार थे -

'च्यथ आकाशुक गाश प्रज़लावतम,
सथ ग्वरुँ हावतम गटि मंजुँ गाश ।
हदुँ रऽस्यति वदुँ वदुँ निशि म्वकुँलावतम।।
सथ ग्वरुँ हावतम -- ।।

इनके पश्चात इन कवियों ने श्रोताओं को श्रद्धा मग्न कर लिया :-

श्री काशीनाथ 'बागवान'-(मंझे हुए कश्मीरी कवि) -

ज़िन्दगी म्याऽन्य छय चे'य अथे,
रथि खारतम सतसंगुँ वते ।
मन अर्पण चान्यन चर्णन ।
किथुँ वर्णन करुँ ग्वन चाऽनी ।।

श्री नारायण कौल 'यारबाश', -

कास जल जल पीड़ायि साने,
शोलि ड़यकुँलोन अनुग्रे'ह चाने ।

श्री ओंकारनाथ च्रंगू ने भक्ति भाव पूर्ण गुरु वन्दना की -

ज़फ पानुँ सथ ग्वरुँ नावचुँय ।
ग्वरुँ नाव भँवु सरुँ तार छुय ।

डॉ० अमरनाथ धर 'अमर' ने (ज़ारुँ पारुँ) विनती शीर्षक की वन्दना सुनाई -

क्रूठ सफरा चुँय सऽहल बनावतम,
प्यठुँ त्रावतम मे बोनि शेहजार ।
लोलुँ व्यचार अऽंद्र्युम वुजुँनावतम ।।
व्यछुँनावतम में ज्ञानुक सार ।

श्री 'अमर' के पश्चात डॉ० रोशनलाल सराफ 'रोशन'

ने अपने विशेष स्वर में अपनी भावपूर्ण वंदना सुनाई । सारे श्रोतागण मस्त मग्न हो गए । बोल इस प्रकार थे -

लाले बदखशां ज़ोतान प्रज़लान,
छुस नूराह बे पनाह ।
कमाल-ए-अफ़शां रोयस शूबान,
छु नूराह बे पनाह ।

सारे भवन को गुंजा दिया रोशन जी ने ।

श्रीमती बिमला जी ने तो मन के कमल को खिला दिया । इस अन्दाज़ में अपनी वंदनाएँ मधुर कंठ से गाई कि श्रोतागण तथा कविगण झूम झूम कर पुल्कित हो उठे ।

श्री पीताम्बर नाथ धर 'फानी' ने श्रद्धालु जन को ध्यान मग्न कर दिया। जाने माने कवि 'फानी' जी ने -

जय जय भगवान गोपीनाथस,
गोपीनाथस जय जयकार ।
हरदम हर विज़ि हर हर सातस,
गोपीनाथस जय जयकार
'फाऽनी' व्यचारनाऽग्य् लो'ग तर्फातन,
त्राऽविथ हज़रतबल, आंचार ।
पर्बत तुलुॅमुल रोव ग्वण्ुं मातस ,
गोपीनाथस जय जयकार ।।

फानी जी के बाद श्री टी० एन गंजू 'शान्त' ने अपनी गुरु वन्दना सुनाई जिसे सब ने सराहा ।

से'द्यन तुॅ सादन विधि बाऽवुॅथ,
बऽकत्यन हाऽवुॅथ ज्ञानुॅच वथ ।
शेर सोन कर्मुॅ लोन दिसाऽ वरदानय,
भगवान गोपीनाथ चे' डंडवत प्रणाम ।।

वन्दना भक्ति पूर्ण थी। श्री गंजु के उपनाम पर श्री 'सायिल' ने उन्हें आगे ' शान्त' के स्थान पर 'विश्वास' लिखने की प्रेरणा की । श्री सायिल ने कहा कि ऐसा ठीक नहीं होता क्योंकि प्रसिद्ध लेखक तथा कवि डॉ० आर० एल० शान्त हैं । गंजू साहब ने यह मान लिया । इसी प्रकार श्री ओंकार नाथ च्रंगू साहब ने जो 'रोशन' के उपनाम से लिखते थे ने नवयुवक डॉ० रोशनलाल 'रोशन' को बडी उधारता से कहा कि आज से मैं ओंकार नाथ च्रंगू ही लिखूंगा और डाक्टर रोशनलाल 'रोशन' ही लिखेंगे । श्री सायिल ने नये लेखकों से प्रार्थना की कि वह उपनाम नया ही ढूंढकर लिखें । इनके बाद श्री बद्री नाथ पण्डिता 'अभिलाश' ने अपनी रची गुरु वन्दना सुनाकर उपस्थित सज्जनों को प्रसन्न किया ।

बऽकत्यव छि अऽन्यमुॅत्य बऽर्य बऽर्य चंदय
बुॅ क्याह वन्दय चे' छो'रुय पान ।
मंज़ सबायि मा गछुॅ बो गन्दय ।।
बुॅ क्याह वंदय चे़ छो'रुय पान ।।

अभिलाश जी के पश्चात श्री साथी पुष्कर वली 'पोषिमो'त़' ने अपनी गुरु वंदना प्रस्तुत की और जब श्री 'सायिल' ने उनसे भी 'पोषिमो'त' न लिखने का अनुरोध किया तो वे कहने लगे मेरे नाथ के साथ साथी है जो कि पं० पोष्करनाथ कौल 'पोषिमो'त' के साथ नहीं है । अत: इन दोनों में अन्तर है ।

हा ज़ीवुॅ कथ प्यठ छुख परेशान ।
तार दियि भवुॅसरु पानुॅ भगवान ।।

इनके पश्चात श्री ए० के० जलाली साहब की विनती पर उन्हें हिन्दी भाषा में अपनी वन्दना सुनाने की अनुमति दी गई । क्योंकि कवि सम्मेलन कश्मीरी भाषा में हो रहा था, इसी लिए ऐसा करना पड़ा ।

इनकी हिन्दी रचना के बाद श्री पोष्करनाथ कौल 'पोशिमो'त' द्वारा भेजी हुई दो वंदनाओं में से एक की कई पंक्तियां श्री सायिल ने सुनाई । क्योंकि श्री 'पोशिमो'त' किसी विशेष कारणवश कवि सम्मेलन में स्वयं उपस्थित न हो सके थे ।

व्वथ पानो अच़ ग्वरॅ दारस,
तति नारस शे'हजार बनियो ।
भवुॅसागर मोहऽ से'न्दि तारस ।
तति नारस शे'हजार बनियो ।।

इसके बाद सभापति के आग्रह से श्री 'सायिल' ने अपनी गुरु वन्दना अपने विशेष मधुर तर्रनुम में सुनाकर सभी उपस्थित भक्तों को भक्ति मगन कर दिया -

लोलु नाद लायय ग्वरॅ दीवुॅ म्यानि,

यितु अशि वानि छ्लॅुंहय पाद ।
यिखनय तुं सोरुय गछ़ि आनि मानि ।।
यितुँ अश्विानि छलुॅंहय पाद ।।
मोहऽ मायायि को'रमे पानि रो'स दानि,
हाशव तुँ हामव चॅलि मा च़्यड़ ।
वासना वद करतुँ कड़तुँ परिनि छानि ।।
यितुँ अशिवानि छलुँ हय पाद ।।

और अन्त में श्री जानकीनाथ कौल 'कमल' ने अपनी ज्ञान पूर्ण 'सद्‌ग्वरूँ प्रसाद' शीर्षक से और 'गृहस्तीयस व्वपदीश' सुनाई और साथ-साथ व्याख्या भी की।

१- कर दया सथ ग्वरुँ च़्यथ रूप म्योनुय ।
सथ वथ हावतम तुँ लबुॅंहा थ्यत् ।।
२- वुनि छुय आदन कर चुँ हरे ।
मव खोच़ पामन लूकूँ गरे ।।

इन भक्ति ज्ञान तथा भाव पूर्ण रचनाओं के साथ ही आजका लीला कवि सम्मेलन पूरा हुआ ।

आश्रम की ओर से समस्त भक्ति कवि गण, भक्त जन पुरुषों तथा महिलाओं को जलपान कराया गया जोकि आश्रम की रीति है । कश्मीरी कहवा और बाक़रखानी खिलाई गई जिसे इस आश्रम का प्रसाद माना जाता है ।

अन्त में ट्रस्ट के प्रधान जी ने कवि-गण तथा उपस्थित भक्तों का भाव पूर्वक धन्यवाद किया और कामना की ऐसे कवि सम्मेलन आए दिन बार बार बुलाये जायें तो अच्छा होगा । संचालक श्री सायिल ने ऐसा लीला कवि सम्मेलन पम्पोष एनक्लेव नई दिल्ली में भी आयोजित करने का प्रस्ताव रखा जिसे सभी उपस्थित श्रोताओं ने सर्व सम्मति से पास किया और इसी आशा के साथ उपस्थित सज्जन आश्रम की सांध्य प्रार्थना में सम्मिलित हो गए ।

ओंकार यलि लयि ओनुम,
वुहि कोरुम पननु पान।
शे वोत त्राऽविथ सथ मारग रोटुॅंम,
त्यलि लल ब' वाऽचुॅस प्रकाशस्थान ।।

I set my body ablaze when I mastered the practice
of the mystic syllable Om,
Giving up the sixfold path I betook myself to the seventh.
Only then did I, Lall, reach the abode of light.

राजु हंस आऽसिथ सपदुख को'लुय
कुस्ताम चो'लुय क्याहताम ह्यथ ।
ग्रटुॅं गव बंद तय ग्रटन ह्यो'त गो'लुय,
ग्रटुॅं वोल चो'लुय फल फो'ल ह्यथ ।।

Though a royal swan you have become speechless.
Someone, it seems, has carried away something of thine.
When the mill came to a halt the grain channel was choked.
Away went the miller with the grain.

- Lal Ded

जगदगुरु भगवान गोपीनाथ जी

- पण्डित जानकीनाथ कौल 'कमल'

(स्वर्गीय 'कमल' साऽबन ओस यि लेख यथ पत्रिकायि मंज़ इस्तेमाल करॅनुक मे इजाज़त द्युत्मुत । केंह काल ब्रोंठ ओस 'बालु अपारि' प्रोग्रामस मंज़ दूरदर्शन श्रीनगरन यि लेख काऽशिर्यन लूकन तान्य वातुनोवमुत – ए0 एन0 दर)

स्नातं तेन समस्त तीर्थ सलिले दत्ता च सर्वावनिः
यज्ञानां च कृतं सहस्रमखिलाः देवाश्च सन्तूर्पिताः ।
संसाराच्च समुद्धृताः स्वपितराः त्रैलोक्यपूज्योऽथसौ
यस्य ब्रह्मविचारने क्षणमपि स्थैर्यं मनः प्राप्नुयात् ।।

शासत'र छि वनान ज़ि -

यमिस अकिस साधकस ति परब्रह्म परमेश्वर स'न्दिस ध्यानस मंज़ अकिस क्षणस ति ध्यान ठ'ह'रावस आव तमिय ज़्यून

१- पृथ्वी प्यठ सारिन'य तीर्थन मंज़ श्रान करनुक फल

२- सा'र'य पृथ्वी दान दिनुक फल

३- सास'ब'द्य यग'न्य करनुक फल

४- त'मिय हेक्य सा'रिय दीवता प्रसन्न क'रिथ

५- त' संसार' निश को'रुन सारिन'य प्यतरन हुन्द उदार

६- ब्ययि छे त्रयिलूकी त'मिस'य पूज़ान ।

ति गव ज़ि त्रनव'निय भूः भुवः त' स्वः लूकन मंज़ छु सुय थ्यकनस लायक बनान ।

यिथ्य महान् आत्मा छि संसारस मंज़ त' खास पा'ठ्य भारतस मंज़ विज़ि विज़ि स्यठा वथिम'त्य । मगर कु'दरतचि पोशिवारि सोन्दर त' शूभ'व'नि र्यष्यवारि कशीरि मंज़ छु यिथ्यव र'त्यव महात्माहव घरय ज़न त' बनोवमुत। यति छि -

ज्ञान'वान त' भक्तिमान सन्त,
कर्म'वान त' तीज़'वान वीर
र्यष्य, अवधूत त' पीर
ज़ड भरत हिव्य स्यद्ध त' साध
ब्ययि ब'ड्य ब'ड्य साहित्यकार त'
कलाकार वोथिम'त्य ।

यि द्युत दिनस मंज़ छे न' यतिचि ज़नान' ति केंह पथ हिशि रोज़' मच' । कशीरि ह'न्दिस माय, मोहबत त' मिलचारस ब्ययि यतिक्यन लूकन ह'न्दिस किरदारस कुस सना वातिहे ! ब्रह्मलीन जगद्गुरु भगवान गोपीनाथ जी आ'स्य अमिय माजि कशीरि ह'न्द्य अख माया-नाज़ हस्ती यिह'न्ज़ सुमरण यिहिन्द्य भख'त्य त' प्रेयमी वुनि ति दोह पथ दोह' त' वरीह पत' वरीह यि द'पिज़ि छि लो'लि मन्ज़ लल'नावान त' सुलनावान यथ शरणा'र्थी अवस्थायि मंज़ ति । यि छु त'मिस'य अवधूत सन्त' सुन्द बजर त' भ'खत्यन प्यठ प्रसन्न रोज़नुक नमून' ।

गोपीनाथ जियिन्य ज़िन्दगी, साधना त' ब्ययि ब्ययि कामि छे आ'स'म'च़ खुल' किताब योततام यि पन'निस'य दीशस मंज़ त' पनन्यन'य आ'शिनावन त' दोस्तन स'त्य रोज़ान आ'स्य। मगर तीच़ अघूर साधना तप त' ज्ञान कति प्रोवमुत ओस यिमव त' कमिस गुरस निश, यमिकिन्य यिम अवधूत भगवान त' जगद्गुरु लूकव मा'न्य, यि छु अख बो'ड रहस्य । खा'र अस्य वुछव तिय यि असि केंह केंह वुछनस त' बोज़नस मंज़ आव । बूज़मुत छु ज़ि सत् पुरुषन ह'न्ज़ चर्चा करन' स'त्य छि असि हिव्य साधारण लूख ज़िन्दगियि मंज़ तरकियि ह'न्ज़ वथ रटान त' आ'खर सु'ख-शा'न्ती प्रावान।

यिथ पा'ठय पोम्पुर छु शम'हस प्यठ विज़ि विज़ि गथ करनि यिवान तिथय पा'ठय ओस भगवान गूपीनाथस निश तिहुन्द अख टो'ठ भ'खत्य श्री शंकरनाथ फोत'दार तिमन निश प्रथ दोह सीवायि मंज़ रोज़ान' खा'तर' यिवान । यि फोत'दार सा'बस भगवान जियस मुतलख प'ज़ त' ज़ा'विज खबर आ'स ति आसि खाल'य कां'सि हा'सिल । वलिव अ'मिस'न्द्यव'य लीखिम'त्यव वरकव प्यठ' करव भगवान जियिनि जीवन लीलायि ह'न्ज़

पा'र्यज़ान। ब्ययि यि ति केंह प'ज़ कथा बूज़म'च़ आसि सो'ति करव आम लूकन जानका'री दिन' बापथ बयान :

श्रीनग'र' बान'मह'लस मंज़ ओस अख साधारण गृहस्थ घर' । अमि घरुक मा'लिख ओ'स पंडित नारायण जुव भान। यि ओ'स पशमीन बापार करान। दिल' किञ ओस बो'ड त' व्यवहार ओसुस शो'द । अ'मिस'न्ज़ि भा'र्यायि ओस नाव हार'माल। हार'मालि हुन्द मोल ओस पंडित प्रसाद जुव पा'र्युम युस गुप्त विचारन हुन्द अख बो'ड सन्त ओस त' लूख आ'सिस वनान 'जड़ भरत' । अमिस आ'स क्षीरभवा'नी(तुल'मुलि) तीर्थस प्यठ'य अकि दोह भगवती रा'ज्ञा प्रकट सपन्यम'च़ त' ओसनस वोन'मुत ज़ि ब' यिमय च्य' निश कूर रूप ज़न्मस । सो आ'स यह'य हार'माल यमिस विवाह सपनिथ भगवान गोपीनाथ थन' प्यव। ता'रीख ओस १९ हार १९५५ विक्रमी संवत् (3 जुलाई 1898 A.D) ।

हालांकि नारान जुव भान सुन्द मोल लक्ष्मण जुव भान ओ'स डूगर' राजस मंज़ वज़ीरि-वज़ारत, अ'ज़्युक डिप्टी कमिशनर, मगर ब्रोंठ कुन रूद गर' गुज़ार' किञ पथ पथ'य गछ़ान । अयालबा'री त' लाचारी आयस पेश । नारान जुव ओस परमेश्वर स'न्ज़ ज़ान करन' खा'तर' भगवान सं'ज़ि भ'खतियि कुन ज़्यादय पाहन लो'गमुत। हुपा'र्य रूद्य न' ब्यनि-भाय' ति तिथ्य ओसूदहाल त' वार'वति युथ ज़न गोपीनाथस ह्यकहन पर'नाविथ त' बो'ड गुज़ार'वोल बना'विथ । गरय यलि न' वार' रूद त' ल'डक' क्याह परि त' क्याह करि । गूपीनाथस प्यव मिडल पास क'रिथ'य स्कूल त्रावुन। अगर ज़न अमिस संस्कृत, फारसी त' ब्ययि ज़बा'न्यन ह'ज़ ज़ान हा'सिल आ'स मगर यिमन रूज़ गरिच माय कम त' आस्य रास'लीलायन त' भजन मण्डलियन मंज़'य फेरान। सन्तन निश आस्य बडि शोक' सान गछ़ान मगर दिल' आस्य स'न्य कथ आ'स'ख न' न्यबर फटान। शहरस मंज़ ओस अख प्रो'न प्रिन्टिंग प्रेस यथ नाव ओस विशनाथ प्रेस। अति क'र अ'म्य त्र्यन वरियन कम्पोसिटर सं'ज़ का'म त पानय त्रा'व'न नौकरी।

गोपीनाथ ओस लोक'चार प्यठय हार'पर्बत भगवती शारिकायि प्रक्रमस गछ़ान। क्षीर भवा'नी तुल'मुल ति ओस वक्त वक्त' गछ़ान। यलि यि २५ वुहुर'य ओस त' माजि भगवतियि को'रनस प्रसाद। अमिस आयि बशाशत। खो'श गव। मगर अ'तिय कोडुन न' थक। यि लो'ग ज़बरदस्त साधना कर'नि । यि दपिज़ि शद' मद' ब्यूठ लंगोट' कसि'थ पज़'र'च पूर' ज़ान करन' खा'तर' कूशिश कर'नि। फिल्मी बा'तन मंज़ ति छि कुनि सात' ननि कथ' वनान। बोज़न वोलुय गछ़ि आसुन। 'ज़िन्दगी है खेल, कोई पास कोई फेल' । कस छे खबर ज़ि यथ ज़िन्दगी हं'दिस मा'दानस मंज़ क'म्य ज़्यून त' क'म्य होर? क'म्य क'र क'च मेहनत त' कमिस त'ज्य न' कर'न्य। यि छु सोरुय सिरि मौला।

गोपीनाथ जियन आ'स केंचन सन्तन स'त्य ज़ान ब्रोन्ठ'य क'रम'च। अख गयोव ज़नकाक तुफ'च युस हब'कदल'नख' ओस पन'निस शिष्य स्वामी आफताब जू वांगन स'न्दिस गरस मंज़ रोज़ान त' ब्रह्मचा'र्य ओस। यि ओस बडि पायुक संत य'म्य गुरु-गीता ग्रंथ प्रधान मोन त' अम्युक पाठ शिश्यन सान दोहय ओस करान । पन'नि लीलायि ति आसन से'ठा लेछ'मच़' । बूज़िथ'य छु मन ज़न त' लगिथ गछ़ान। आफताब जुव वांग'ञ ओस ज़नकाकुन मुख्य शिष्य। यिम आ'स्य स्यठा गाट'ल्य त' व्यचारवान। यलि यिम पत' ज़नकाकुन जग आ'स्य करान त' गूपीनाथजी आ'स्य ज़रूर हा'ज़िरी दिनि गछ़ान पन'ञ भाव' पोश ह्यथ। फोतॅदार जियिनि वनुॅनु किन्य आऽस्य भगुॅवानजी ति ज़नुॅकाकुॅन्य शिष्य तुॅ स्वामी आफताब जुव आऽस्य तिमन ज़िठय।

सन् १९२३ आस पास आ'स्य गोपीनाथ अकिस जटाधारी संत सं'ज़ सीवा करनि स्यकि-डाफर गछ़ान। अमिस आ'स्य वनान स्वा'मी बालक काव या बाल जी। यिम आ'स्य चिलिम च्यवान त' गूपीनाथन ति ह्यच अति चिलिम च्यन्य। अकि फिरि गव गोपीनाथ जी पन'न्यन रिश्तदारन त' म्यतरन स'त्य मट्टन यात्रा कर'नि। खनबल ताम ओस नावि गछ़ुन। मगर वतिय खो'त गोपीनाथ बो'ठ त' कुनुय ज़ो'न गव जीवन सा'बुन

दर्शुन कर'नि। यिछ़ आ'स अमिस सादन-सन्तन स'त्य सत्संग करन'च कल। तिमन निश आस्य केंह न त' केंह मनि धारान त' अभ्यास करान। यिथ' पा'ठय मा'छ तुल'र छे कमन कमन पोशन व्यूर तुलान तिथय पा'ठय ओ'स गोपीनाथ सन्तन निश गछ़िथ परमार्थ ज़ा'निथ पनुन पान रथि खारन' खा'त'र प्रयत्न करान। गीतायि मंज़'य छु वोन'मुत --

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत्।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः।।

प'नुन पान गछ़ि पानय तुलुन, बो'न गछ़ि न'त्रावुन, तिक्याज़ि पन'नुय पान छु तारान ति त' पन'नुय पान छु मारान ति'।

यिमव ति क'र जवा'नी मंज़'य कठिन साधना। अमि सात' आ'स्य यिम दोयित्र'ह व'ह'रय। यि माजि हुन्द गो'बुर रूद सतन वरियन (1929 - 1936 A.D) अकिस'य बिस्तरस प्यठ दोह'क्यन आ'ठ'वुनिय प'हरन बस पज़'र'च वथ लभन' खा'तर' ध्यानस त' व्यचारस मंज. मगन। कुनि ओस न र्यत'बद्यन ख्यवान'य केंह त' कुनि ओस ब'ड्य बत' थाल निवान ख्यत। बो'क्यव ओस चिलिमि चर'स भरान त' कुनिय ज्यूत लगावान। यथ कमरस मंज़ यिम आसन दा'रिथ आ'स्य तति ओस सिरिफ अख चां'ग्य पींचाह दज़ान त' ब्ययि आ'स्य गरदि ह'न्द्य ला'द्य। वनान छि ज़ि गगरन ओस अमिसं'ज़ि अकिस खोरि ज़ो'द कोरमुत त' अमिस आ'स न' खबर'य।

दो'यव बायव त' दो'यव बे'न्यव कर अमिस वो'तलव'निस सन्तस खूर्य फकीरी - ख्यनुक त' चनुक, रोज़नुक त' पोशाकुक सोरुय इन्तिज़ाम। यिहिन्द्य मा'ल्य नारान जुवन ओस पनुन बो'ड मकान सोरुय पन'नि दोयिमि माजि (वोर' माजि) द्युतमुत। त' पान' ओस शुर्य बा'च़ ह्यथ गर'गर' फेरान। अमि किन्न प्ययि गोपीनाथ जियस स्यठा जायि बदलावनि। मगर यि सतन वरियन अख साधना कर'न अकिस'य जायि महकम' पा'ठय त' पोतुस द्राव गुलि गुल्ज़ार। वोन्य ओस हर वक्त' पन'निय लयि स'त्य रोज़ान। बस ब्रोंठकनि धून्य ज़ा'लिथ चिलिम चवान। अन्दर्युम विकास ओस कुनि कुनि त्यलि न्यबर छ़टान यलि पन'न्यन भख्त्यन मंज़ बिहिथ ओस वोलसनस यिवान।सन्तन हं'ज़ न्यब'रिमि कामि छे बहानय योत आसान। अन्द'र्य किन्य छि तिम पननिस ह्यसस खबरदार आसान। अमा पो'ज़ ति ज़ानुन छु ब्ययन ह'न्दि खा'तर' बड' मुश्किल।

मगर यि कथ ति छे प'ज़ ज़ि लूकन प्यठ य'लि यिथिस सन्त सुन्द प्रभाव प्ययि त' तिमन गछ़न मुश्किलन हल तिम ति छिन' तमिस पननिस दिलस मंज़ जाय दिन' निश लो'ब ह्यकन रूज़िथ। भगवान गोपीनाथ जी आ'स्य वो'न्य त्याग'च मूर्ति त' वैराग'च प'ज़ मिसाल बनेम'त्य। ईश्वर ज्ञान क्यन रहस्यन ओस सन्योमुत त' दीह'-अभिमान'निश ओस यूत अलग गोमुत जि. चिलिमि रेह खारन' सत्य यिम' त्यम्बर'रि त' त्योंगल आस्य अमिसं'दिस क'र क'र करव'निस न'विस रफल फ्यरनस प्यठ प्यवान त' अमिस ओस न' पताह'य रोज़ान। अकि दोह प्रुछ शष्यव अमिस जि. तो'ह्य क्याज़ि छिव' यीत्य कठोर फाक' थवान? तोर' दोपनख' ब' छुस यूत स्यठा यिमव चरस' दामव किन्य ख्यवान त' बतस छुन' मा'ल'य रोज़ान। यिय गव ' ज़िन्दय मरुन त' पान' रो'स पान सो'रुन' (यि ज़न मट्टन'क्य परमानन्दन वोन'मुत छु)। यिमय चमत्कार वुछिथ आ'स्य यिहिन्द्य शिष्य त' प्रयमी यिमन ज़्यादय वलन' यिवान।

भगवान गूपीनाथ जियन गुज़ा'र साद' त ' श्रूच़ ज़िदगी। कशीरि मंज़' ओस न' यि ज़ांह ति न्यबर द्रामुत। लूकन मंज़ ति ओस न' रोज़ुन पसन्द करान। वुमरि रूद पन'न्यन'य आ'शनावन निश। लूक'-बो'ड ति ओस न' बनुन यछ़ान। कथ' कम त' चिलिमि स'त्य लय लगातार। कुनि ओस पानस'य स'त्य कथ लो'ति लो'ति करान त' खाल'य कां'सि स'त्य बोलान। मगर अन्द'र्यकिन्य ओस हुश्यार त' खबरदार, ब्रह्म-भावनायि मन्ज़ यूत मगन ज़ि कांह हय दर्शन' खा'तर यियिहे तमिस ओस घण्ट'वादन प्रारुन प्यवान योत ताम यि अ'छ्य मुच़रिहे।

दपान छि यिमन आ'स अष्ट-स्यद्धियि हा'सिल यमि किन्न यिमव केंह भविष्य वा'णियि ति करि दीशि खा'तर'। सन् १९४७ हस मंज़ छि अकि दोह पानस'य स'त्य

वनान – ' अमा यि फौज क्याह सना छु करान। कशीरि प्यठ लद्दाख ताम कोन' छि स्योद वथ कडान।' पतय ज़्यूनुख ज़ोजिला पास त' स्योद वथ खुलेयि । सन् १९६२हस मंज़ वोनुख पननि ब्यनि ज़प'र देदि त' अमृतानन्द जियस 'भद्र'कालियि तूफान यियि त' पेठ्य चलि ' । सन् १९६५हस मंज़ ति यिथय पा'ठ्य – ' अद' जंग आयि लडन त' भारतन ज़्यून।'

केंछ़न वनिख कांह खबर ब्रोण्ठुय यमि किञ तिमन यिन' वाजिनि आपदायि गयि दूर। केंछ़न छि यिमन प्यठ यिछ़ दृढ भावना ज़ि तिमन छु भासान वुनि ति तिहुन्द सो'ख त' शा'न्ती दिन- वोल अथ' कलस प्यठ ।

वनुँनुँ छु यिवान कि गो'ड' आ'स्य शक्ति उपासक त' पञ्चस्तवी, भवानी सहस्रनाम त' सौन्दर्य लहरी आ'स्य मु'खास परान। महिम्नास्तोत्र, विष्णुसहस्रनाम, उत्पलस्तोत्रावली, गुरु-गीता त' भगवद्गीता – यिम ग्रन्थ ति आ'सिख स्यठा टा'ठय त' परान या बोज़ान आ'स्य।। निर्वाणस गछ़न' केंह वरीह ब्रोन्ठ प्रुछ़ अकि दोह शिष्यव यिमन – ' तोहि कुस महाराह छुव' गुरु' । जवाबस मंज़ वोन'नख यूत'य खास पा'ठ्य – 'भगवत्गीतायि हंद्यव सतव हतव श्लोकव मंज़' ह्यकि कांह अख श्लोक ति कां'सि हुन्द गुरु बनिथ।' घरि घरि आ'स्य पन'न्यन शिष्यन वनान ज़ि पनुन टो'ठ परमेश्वर ज़ानन' खा'तर' छे ' मेहनत पन'ञ ब्ययि गुरु कृपा' ज़रूरथ, बस।

माता शक्तियि हं'दि विकासुक अनुभव क'रिथ क'र यिमव शिव पूजा। यिमव ज़ोन ज़ि शुद्ध संव्यत'य छे सोरुय केंह यति शक्ति छे शिवस स'त्य कुनिय त' योहय गव परमेश्वर यमिस ज़ा'निथ त' मा'निथ छे संसार' क्यव दुःखव त' ज़्यन' मरण निश मुक्ति मेलान। कशीरि हं'ज़ि शैवमत' कि प्रत्यभिज्ञा शासत्र मुता'बिक ग'य पनुन पान पर्ज़नावुनय मुक्ति। बाकय छु सोरुय ठबाब'य। यि कथ आ'स भगवान गोपीनाथ जियस पूर' पा'ठय ज़िहनस मंज़ आम'च़। तवय किन्य आ'स'ख अवधूत चाल धा'रम'च़। मगर अथ दशायि वा'तिथ ति आ'स्य यिम विवीकस त' व्यच़ारस ज़्याद' तरजीह दिवान। भक्तियि हुन्द रस ओस यिमन प्रथ ना'डी मंज़ भरिथ। यिम आ'स्य गरि गरि वनान –

अहंकारस नमस्कार,
सुय गव ओंकार,
तमि स'त्य बनि सा'क्षात्कार।

यिम आ'स्य उपासना त' साधारण पूज़ा परमेश्वर ज़ान'नुक ज़्यूठ उपाय मानान। वनान आ'स्य ज़ि ' यि गव वीरि शिहिलिस तल पकुन। परमेश्वर ज़ानन खा'तर' गछ़ि न्यथनोन सपदिथ वो'ठ लायिन्य त' सोरुय त्रा'विथ तस शरण गछ़ुन ।'

जिन्दगी ह'न्यन पतिम्यन दो'न वरियन मंज़ दित्य यिमव पन'न्यन भक्त्यन शरीर त्रावन'चि यछ़ायि ह'न्य क'त्याह इशार'। अक्य भखत'य क'र स्यठा'हय फिकिर ज़ा'हिर। तमिस वो'नुख – ' अमर छा मरान ज़ांह ' ।

मई २८, १९६८ कि दोह क'र यिमव इह लीला समाप्त ज़्यवि स'त्य लो'ति वनान ॐ नमः शिवाय ।

वनवास ज़ान तो पनुन पानय,
मन तञय प्राणुँय कर उपवास ।
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खारान दयस अदुँ कथ हाँछ़ ।।

लम तो पानो अञकिसुँय रज़े,
दरि नो द्वन-त्रन थपि दिथ पान।
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गंज़्ज़रुँन्य कथ छिय लूकुँ हुँदं वञन ।।

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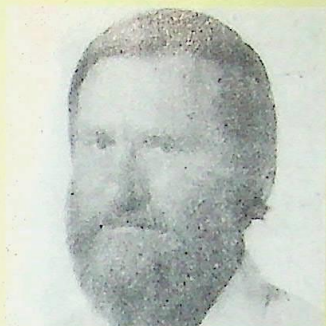
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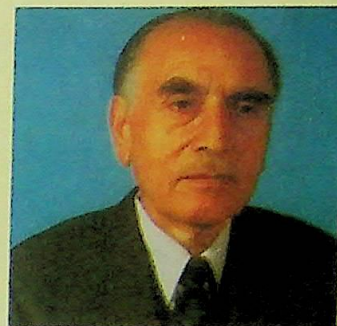
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